

1984

## Childrearing in the Early Chesapeake: The Tucker Family and the Rise of Republican Parenthood

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<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-pams-8v14>

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Childrearing in the Early Chesapeake:  
"The Tucker Family and the Rise of Republican Parenthood

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A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History  
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

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by  
Linda Clark Wentworth  
1984

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Linda Clark Wentworth  
Linda Clark Wentworth

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To my parents, Gordon and Elizabeth Wentworth,  
in appreciation of their continuing support

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
INTRODUCTION.....	2
CHAPTER I	
CHILDREARING PATTERNS AMONG THE COLONIAL GENTRY OF THE CHESAPEAKE.....	6
CHAPTER II	
REPUBLICAN CHILDREARING ON THE PLANTATION: PATTERNS OF GENTEEL PARENTING IN THE POST-REVOLUTIONARY CHESAPEAKE.....	22
CHAPTER III	
REPUBLICAN CHILDREARING IN THE CHESAPEAKE: A STUDY OF THE TUCKER FAMILY.....	51
CHAPTER IV	
CONCLUSION.....	73
APPENDIX	
GARRISON ARTICLES.....	81
THE FAMILY OF ST. GEORGE AND FRANCES TUCKER.....	83
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	84
VITA.....	91

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In completing this thesis, I owe my greatest debt to my adviser, Jim Whittenburg, whose encouragement and friendship have contributed immensely to the quality of my work at William and Mary.

I am also grateful to readers James Axtell and Patricia Gibbs for their careful reading of several drafts of this thesis. In addition, Ms. Gibbs originally helped me to select and define this thesis topic.

I wish to thank Margaret Cook of Special Collections, Swem Library, for enthusiastically sharing her knowledge of the Tucker family and guiding me through the Tucker-Coleman Collection.

Special thanks are owed to Claudia Lamm Wood whose insights in the course of our many conversations helped me to realize the importance of the history of the family and the great need for historians to remedy their long neglect of this field.

Finally I wish to acknowledge the support I received from my friends at the Institute of Early American History and Culture, support which greatly assisted me in leaping the final hurdle and completing this thesis.

## ABSTRACT

In the Chesapeake, as in all America, the institution of the family underwent many changes during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While many of these changes were demographic or structural in nature, parenting styles also underwent a major transformation during this period. After examining the changing patterns of childrearing in the Chesapeake from the seventeenth to the late eighteenth century, this thesis will present the childrearing style of St. George and Frances Tucker as an example of the new style of childrearing which emerged among planter families at the close of the period.

In the seventeenth century, childrearing patterns were largely determined by the high mortality rate which prevented many children from reaching adulthood without losing one or both parents. Under these unstable conditions fathers acquired little patriarchal authority over their children and bonds between family members were relatively weak. Children were often treated as miniature adults and expected to mature early. This pattern lasted until the mortality rate declined early in the eighteenth century. Then gentry families replaced the confusion of the preceding era with an emphasis on order and stability. Relations between family members were restrained and unemotional. Children were taught to defer to their fathers and to keep to their place within the family hierarchy.

In the final quarter of the eighteenth century a new style of childrearing emerged among the gentry in the Chesapeake. Ties with relatives outside the nuclear family declined while parent-child relationships became more affectionate and emotional. Parental roles changed as fathers became less authoritarian and mothers acquired more influence over their children. Both parents sought to turn their children into virtuous republican citizens. Instead of applying strict discipline, parents instructed their children by following Lockean methodology and making parental affections dependent on the children's good behavior.

The childrearing experience of St. George and Frances Tucker provides an example of the new "republican" style of parenting practiced in the Chesapeake. Close emotional ties existed between the Tucker parents and their children. Frances Tucker held considerable influence over the children, especially her three oldest sons. St. George Tucker was not an authoritarian father. Instead the Revolutionary War colonel and district county judge was interested in raising his children to be virtuous republican citizens.

An examination of the lives of the Tuckers' adult children reveals that, like most parents, St. George and Frances experienced varying degrees of success in their childrearing efforts. However, when viewed in light of the parents' attempt to raise loyal republican citizens, the Tucker children proved to be remarkably patriotic and civic-minded. Most important, the Tuckers' new style of parenting represented a major shift away from the authoritarian parenthood of the early eighteenth century toward the more permissive and affectionate style of parenting practiced today.



Childrearing in the Early Chesapeake:

The Tucker Family and the Rise of Republican Parenthood

## INTRODUCTION

Until recent years historians tended to overlook the study of perhaps the most basic institution in America, the family, in favor of larger units of social action such as the region, the class, or the party. However, following the pioneering work of Phillippe Ariès in the 1960s, historians became more interested in this "smallest and most intimate of all group environments" and a new field of history grew into being.<sup>1</sup> Within this new field parental attitudes toward children came to represent "touchstones for entire constellations of...social values."<sup>2</sup> By focusing on attitudes toward children and, in particular, on the process of childrearing, historians of the family hope to understand the method by which a culture "transmits itself across the generations" and to identify those beliefs and values important enough to a society that it wishes to instill them in its young.<sup>3</sup>

An intricate relationship also exists between the inner workings of the family and the larger historical process.<sup>4</sup> Economic, political, social, and ideological change in a society can all alter the structure of the family and cause parents to revise their childrearing methods. In early American history this relationship is particularly apparent in the Chesapeake of the eighteenth century. Here, as elsewhere in eighteenth-century America, ideological, political, and social change

corresponded with the development of new beliefs about the family and parenting styles. However, while the transformation of the region's government, social structure, and ideology has often been studied, the history of the eighteenth-century planter family has not.<sup>5</sup>

In this study I chose to take a personal look at the eighteenth-century Chesapeake family by reading the letters of one particular family--that of St. George and Frances Tucker. Their many letters enabled me to become intimately acquainted with the family and to discover firsthand how the changes in familial emotions, attitudes, and childrearing styles in the eighteenth century touched the lives of the members of this Chesapeake household. Although not representative of all Chesapeake society, the genteel Tucker family provided a valuable case study for several reasons. Most important, their family letters are among the few surviving personal documents that describe Chesapeake family life in the late eighteenth century in detail.<sup>6</sup> While a large percentage of eighteenth-century southern women were illiterate, all of the Tucker women participated in the correspondence. The collection even includes numerous letters by the children. In addition, the Tuckers were highly attuned to the changes in their society, embracing the new political, ideological, and social tenets of the post-war period. Thus, their letters offer a rare opportunity to study the relationship between the family and the larger world around it.

Not all studies in the history of the family concern such

subjective topics as emotions, attitudes, and childrearing styles. Instead, many researchers employ quantitative methods to measure family size and other known demographic conditions of early family life.<sup>7</sup> However, although it is impossible to gauge scientifically the rise and fall of familial emotions and attitudes or to determine precisely how much of the advice prescribed by childrearing "experts" was actually practiced by parents, it is nevertheless possible to use traditional sources, particularly manuscript collections of families such as the Tuckers, to gain further knowledge of these aspects of the history of the family. As all who have ever immersed themselves in the Tucker letters know, collections of family letters may yield rich rewards, the greatest being a deeper understanding of an institution that has intimately touched the lives of all its students as well as those of countless generations throughout history.

NOTES  
TO THE INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup>J. William Frost, The Quaker Family in Colonial America: A Portrait of the Society of Friends (New York, 1972), p. 1; John Demos, A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony (New York, 1970), p. vii. Two important exceptions to this statement are Arthur W. Calhoun, author of A Social History of the American Family, 3 vols. (Cleveland, 1917), and Alice Morse Earle, author of Home Life in Colonial Days (New York, 1899) and Child Life in Colonial Days (New York, 1927).

<sup>2</sup>Michael Zuckerman, "William Byrd's Family," Perspectives in American History, XII (1979), p. 263.

<sup>3</sup>Wilson Smith, ed., Theories of Education in Early America (New York, 1973), p. xvii; Frost, Quaker Family, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Demos, Little Commonwealth, p. 180.

<sup>5</sup>Two exceptions are Daniel Blake Smith, Inside the Great House: Planter Family Life in Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Society (Ithaca, New York, 1980), and Jan Lewis, The Pursuit of Happiness: Family and Values in Jefferson's Virginia (Cambridge, 1983).

<sup>6</sup>A combination of fortuitous circumstances ensured the present existence of this extremely rich source of information for historians of the family. As an officer in the militia and later as a circuit court judge, St. George was frequently away from home. Because of the closeness of the family, St. George, Frances, and the children all wrote to one another as often as messengers could be found to deliver the letters--during the Revolutionary War, Frances and St. George sometimes wrote one another daily. Fortunately someone in the family felt the need to preserve this correspondence and the following Tucker generations concurred, storing the letters in the attic of the Tucker House in Williamsburg. Thanks to the generosity of Tucker descendent Mrs. George Preston Coleman, the letters today are safely housed in the Special Collections Department of Swem Library at the College of William and Mary.

<sup>7</sup>See the Journal of the History of the Family for demographic studies of the family in a variety of cultures and centuries.

## CHAPTER I

### CHILDREARING PATTERNS AMONG THE COLONIAL GENTRY OF THE CHESAPEAKE

Nourish thy children, O thou good nurse; stablish their feet.  
2 Esdras 2:25

"Better never be born than ill bred," mourned a colonial father concerned about the difficulty of giving his children a genteel upbringing in the Chesapeake.<sup>1</sup> Childrearing was especially important to members of the colonial gentry in the Chesapeake who hoped to pass their positions of leadership on to their offspring. However, primitive conditions in the seventeenth century made it difficult for the relatively small number of genteel parents in the Chesapeake to give their offspring a proper upbringing. Instead, many genteel children were sent to England to acquire education and socialization. In the eighteenth century, the development of Chesapeake society and the emergence of the gentry as a distinct social class brought an improvement in genteel childrearing conditions. Under these new stable conditions, members of the elite were able to develop a new style of childrearing designed to prepare genteel children to follow in their parents' footsteps.

In the seventeenth century, demographic conditions had a profound impact on the size and structure of all Chesapeake

families. Women were scarce in Chesapeake society, and a majority of those in the region were indentured servants who could not marry and begin a family until their terms of service were over. For example, if the 141 women listed as indentured servants in Charles County, Maryland, from 1666 to 1705 served out their terms according to custom, then none married before age twenty-two, and half were twenty-five or older on their wedding day. By completing their terms of service before marrying, these and other immigrant women lost years in which they could have borne up to five children, thus reducing the size of their future families.<sup>2</sup>

Another important demographic condition affecting the family was the region's high mortality rate: malaria and dysentery constantly weakened the colonists, leaving them easy prey for a host of other endemic and epidemic diseases. Because of this danger, husbands and wives often had only a few years to produce offspring--in parts of the Chesapeake, death broke up a majority of seventeenth-century marriages within seven years. And although married women customarily gave birth every other year, forty to fifty percent of their children died before reaching the age of twenty. Throughout the Chesapeake, records reveal that parents often raised only two or three children to adulthood; for example, of the 105 families living in St. Mary's County, Maryland, from 1660 to 1680, in only twelve cases did over three children survive their parents. Thus, together the late marriage<sup>age</sup> and the high mortality rate effectively limited

the size of the family, preventing a significant increase in the population of native-born colonists until late in the century.<sup>3</sup>

For seventeenth-century children in the Chesapeake, the harsh demographic conditions meant that a majority of these native-born colonists would lose one parent before reaching adulthood, and over one third would lose both.<sup>4</sup> Women tended to outlive their husbands and, without any kin close by to offer support, often remarried quickly for survival. Because of the shortage of women in Chesapeake society, widows had no difficulty remarrying and sometimes did so several times. This practice led to the creation of complex, mixed families containing step-parents and stepchildren, half siblings, and orphans, often with a large diversity in the ages of their members. As late as 1680, Chesapeake families both rich and poor still lived in small, two-roomed structures with little or no space for privacy. Within these complex families, tensions and conflicts constituted a serious problem, and children's complaints of ill treatment by step-parents were common.<sup>5</sup> Children unfortunate enough to lose both parents were raised by guardians, under the scrutiny of the orphan's court, a judicial institution that evolved to ensure the proper treatment of the region's many orphans and their estates.<sup>6</sup>

During the often brief period that both parents were alive, Chesapeake families formed hierarchies similar in structure to genteel English families. However, conditions in the Chesapeake



led to changes in the traditional English parental roles. While Chesapeake fathers still stood at the top of the family hierarchy, their patriarchal authority was less prominent because many men died while their children were still young. Although they remained subordinate to their husbands, many women may have held increased familial authority in the Chesapeake because of their important unifying role within the complex, mixed households.<sup>7</sup>

Infants and small children occupied the lowest spot in the family hierarchy. Young boys and girls were dressed in skirts, perhaps as a sign of submission and subordination.<sup>8</sup> During these years parents strove to instill respect and obedience in their offspring. However parents also knew that the danger of disease in the Chesapeake made the future precarious for their small children. Because childhood mortality was high, many parents, especially fathers, showed little surprise or emotion over the death of a young child.<sup>9</sup> Even a dedicated and loving father like William Fitzhugh believed that the death of a young child could be "easily & cheerfully born, if natural affection be laid aside."<sup>10</sup>

By the age of six or seven, and with an improved resistance to disease, children entered a new stage of childhood. Boys began to dress in adult male clothing instead of the skirts of their early childhood, and both boys and girls began to prepare for their future roles in society. The education of most children consisted of learning the practical skills they would need to

survive in an agricultural society. Girls were "brought up to huswifery" and taught to sew, spin, cook, and clean. Boys learned to read, write, and run a farm.<sup>11</sup> While a formal education was difficult to obtain in the Chesapeake, it was nevertheless of great importance to genteel parents who often left instruction for their children's education in their wills. Genteel parents desiring to educate their offspring had two options. Some elected to hire a tutor who boarded with the family. Others, wishing to expose their children to a more polite society than that of the Chesapeake, chose to send them to school in England. While advantageous in some aspects, this choice was expensive and dangerous for the children.<sup>12</sup>

In the Chesapeake, seventeenth-century genteel children became independent from their parents at a relatively early age.<sup>13</sup> While boys legally became adults at twenty-one and girls at eighteen, sons and daughters often inherited property or married--signs that they were considered adults in Chesapeake society--at an earlier age. Children as young as sixteen were allowed to inherit property because fathers, knowing they were likely to die and their wives to remarry before their children reached adulthood, were concerned that a stepfather might mistreat their children or misuse their inheritance. For example, Richard Jones of Maryland willed that his son "enjoy the benefit of his Estate in his own hands and...bee free from all servitude at the age of sixteen either from his mother or any other person."<sup>14</sup> Perhaps because early inheritance was considered normal, many fathers who survived their sons' childhood still gave them their

inheritance before age twenty-one. In contrast to the situation in England, land was plentiful, and while the eldest son usually inherited the home plantation, there was still property left for the remaining sons.<sup>15</sup>

The early autonomy of children in the Chesapeake was also demonstrated by their young age at marriage. In this agricultural society, sons seldom married without owning land to farm. Early possession of their inheritance enabled sons to marry years before they would otherwise have been able. Because of the shortage of women in Chesapeake society and the frequency of parental death, native-born daughters were also able to marry at a young age, much earlier than immigrant women who first had to complete their terms of servitude. In addition, parental death and the uneven sex ratio combined to give daughters a large degree of freedom in their choice of mates.<sup>16</sup>

The eighteenth century brought many changes for genteel parents in the Chesapeake. In the seventeenth century, elite families were forced to raise their children under primitive conditions, often sending them to England to experience "polite" society and <sup>to</sup><sub>^</sub> develop social graces. However by the eighteenth century both the conditions of life and the position of the gentry improved in the Chesapeake. During the early decades of this century, genteel families became well established individually and as a recognized social class with a distinct economic and cultural life-style. United by a growing kinship network, these families ran the civil, ecclesiastical, and military

affairs of the region.<sup>17</sup> Hoping to retain this power for future generations, genteel families developed a style of childrearing to prepare their children for their role as future colonial leaders.

Two changes in the Chesapeake in the eighteenth century involved the size and structure of genteel families. A lower mortality rate, caused by the growth of a native-born population with a heightened resistance to Chesapeake diseases, contributed significantly to these changes. The longer life expectancy for parents and improved survival rate for children, together with an earlier marriage age for women, greatly increased the size of Chesapeake families. Under these conditions, Chesapeake mothers could expect to bear seven or eight children, with five or six surviving to adulthood. However, among the gentry the number of children per family was often even higher because genteel fathers frequently remarried and began second families after the deaths of their first wives. Eighteenth-century men who typify this trend <sup>toward large families</sup> include William Byrd III with five children by his first wife and ten by his second; Landon Carter with four children by one wife and ten by another; Lewis Burwell with fifteen children by one wife; Robert Carter with fifteen sons and daughters by two wives; and Charles Carter with twenty-three children by two wives.<sup>18</sup>

Eighteenth-century genteel families were also large because of their open and inclusive nature. With the rise of the plantation system, the gentry developed new ideas about the nature of the family. Planters who were responsible for all of

the inhabitants of their plantation no longer limited their vision of the family to their wives, sons, and daughters. Instead, planters considered all the inhabitants of their estates to be part of the family, be they tutors, children from other genteel families, overseers, artisans, or slaves. In their writings, slaveowners William Byrd II and Landon Carter both described their slaves as family; for example, in one instance Carter wrote: "My family are all well now some few Negroes excepted."<sup>19</sup> In addition, relatives and friends were urged to visit for extended periods, and many genteel families went for weeks without eating a meal alone. However, lack of privacy was not an issue because the family was considered an extension of the community and not a sanctuary from it.<sup>20</sup>

Relationships between members of genteel families were often similar to formal contracts. Parents and their offspring all occupied specific positions in a rigid family hierarchy and held defined obligations to one another. Concerned with keeping peace and order within their large and socially prominent families, genteel parents stressed the importance of fulfilling familial obligations and maintaining emotional restraint. Parental insistence upon good manners and polite social graces contributed to the maintenance of family peace. In this environment, the children quickly learned that the family always took precedence over the individual and that emotions such as love were to be demonstrated tangibly by material gifts like property.<sup>21</sup>

Responsibility for maintaining order and harmony within large plantation families belonged primarily to the father, whose powerful role accorded him authority over all the members of his household. In 1726 William Byrd II described this

patriarchal role:

I have a large family of my own....Like one of the patriarches, I have my flocks and my lands, my bond-men and bond-women....I must take care to keep all my people to their duty, to set all the springs in motion, and to make everyone draw his equal share to carry the machine forward.<sup>22</sup>

Because this patriarchal authority was an important form of social control in the Chesapeake, fathers were given extensive legal rights over their families. In symbolic terms, the representation of both God and the king as fathers further sanctified the position of the plantation master and convinced the colonists that the family, like a kingdom, needed the government of a stern patriarch.<sup>23</sup>

The genteel mother occupied a familial position well below her husband. By the eighteenth century, Chesapeake mothers had lost their former importance as the unifying elements within complex families. Instead, mothers were judged mainly by the number of offspring they presented to their husbands. With slaves to perform the daily tasks of the household, women's responsibilities were centered around the care of their young children and training of their daughters, work that in early eighteenth-century literature was commonly regarded as unimportant and requiring little skill.<sup>24</sup>

The children occupied the lowest positions within the genteel family. While parents and children had mutual obligations to one another, families often placed more emphasis on the duties of children to their mothers and fathers than on the childrearing responsibilities of the parents. Also, the

duties of the children were considered lifelong, while their parents' obligations were completed when the children reached adulthood and received their inheritance. The children's first duty was to learn deference and obedience to their parents and to continue this behavior throughout their lives. In addition, if their parents reached old age, sons were ~~held~~ responsible for providing them with financial support while daughters were expected to actually care for their aging mother or father. Thus, children represented a type of life insurance for genteel parents in an uncertain world.<sup>25</sup>

While their children were young, genteel parents often paid little attention to them, leaving them instead in the care of slaves or paid nurses or governesses. A planter's typical attitude toward young children is recorded in a diary entry by William Byrd II which reads: "I dined by myself with nobody but the child."<sup>26</sup> The planters' practice of leaving their children under the supervision of slaves was often observed disapprovingly by northern visitors.<sup>27</sup> Other Chesapeake parents preferred to hire governesses for their children; in 1720 Robert Carter advertised for a "grave person of about 40 years of age, that hath been wellbred and is of good reputation and hath been used to breed up children."<sup>28</sup> While under the care of servants, children sometimes developed a "sense of awed distance" from their parents whom they saw **only** under more formal circumstances.<sup>29</sup>

When their children reached seven or eight years of age,

genteel parents became more interested in their upbringing and, in particular, in securing them a formal education. However, during the eighteenth century, Chesapeake parents experienced a growing reluctance to send their children to school in England because of both the expense and what they perceived of as the corruption and licentiousness of the country. Instead, many parents chose to hire a tutor, preferably a young man from a family almost their social equal who had a good education and good morals. For example, in 1756 William Skipwith advertised in the Virginia Gazette for "A Person capable of teaching children Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, [who]... comes well recommended to be a sober and diligent Man."<sup>30</sup> A good tutor would take up many of the responsibilities previously handled by the children's nurse, staying with his students from morning till evening and relieving the parents from the onerous chore of discipline, a task usually accomplished by a whipping.<sup>31</sup>

Once an education was arranged, genteel parents took a great interest in their children's progress, and much of their time with the children was spent discussing class lessons and listening to them read. A boy's education included Greek and Latin, as well as arithmetic, history, and writing. While girls also received an education, it was much less rigorous, and many female students found themselves in the position of young Betty Pratt, who in 1732 wrote sadly to her brother in England: "I find you have got the start on me in learning very much, for you write better already than I expect to do as long as I live; and you are got as far as the Rule of three in Arithmetick, but I can't



cast up a sum in addition cleverly."<sup>32</sup>

For children of both sexes, a development of polite manners and social graces was an equally important part of their formal education. Like other genteel parents, Robert Carter considered his sons' improvement in both "learning and manners" to be the "greatest blessing" he could hope for.<sup>33</sup> At an early age children were taught to carry on polite conversation and <sup>to</sup>eat at the table with proper etiquette. Dancing was another necessary accomplishment, and parents often hired an itinerant dancing master to train their children in this social art. A music or drawing master might also be employed.<sup>34</sup>

Genteel parents in the Chesapeake did not consider their duties complete until their children were safely married to a suitable mate. To preserve the exclusive group identity of the gentry, parents expected their children to marry within this small class. Parents also expected to pass personal judgment on the mates their sons and daughters selected. In 1723 William Byrd II criticized his daughter, Evelyn, for engaging in a romance he disapproved of because this action was both a "breech of duty & breech of faith."<sup>35</sup> As in the seventeenth century, genteel sons were able to marry when they inherited property, usually in their early twenties. Daughters also tended to marry at this age. After endowing their sons with property and their daughters with a marriage portion and seeing them both married to suitable partners, the obligations of genteel parents to their children were completed. The children

were now fully equipped to join their parents in the society of the Chesapeake ruling elite.<sup>36</sup>

For almost three quarters of a century genteel parents in the Chesapeake successfully passed on their beliefs and values to new generations. Because of their early exposure to a powerful patriarchal figure, the children of the gentry were familiar with the concepts of deference and authority and believed that power was a legitimate, necessary, and trustworthy force in society. Raised to be poised and well-mannered, these eighteenth-century children moved confidently into the upper echelons of colonial society to continue their parents' leadership.<sup>37</sup> However, by the last quarter of the eighteenth century, changes within Chesapeake society led to the emergence of new childrearing patterns among the elite. Included among these changes were the decline of the authority of the genteel father and the development of a more affectionate and child-centered genteel family.<sup>38</sup> Finally, the end of the eighteenth century brought a new goal for the Chesapeake elite: to raise the leading citizens of the new republic.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup>Richard Beale Davis, ed. William Fitzhugh and his Chesapeake World 1676-1701 (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1963), p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "The Planter's Wife: The Experience of White Women in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d Ser., XXXIV (1977), pp. 551-552; Russel R. Menard, "Immigrants and their Increase: The Process of Population Growth in Early Colonial Maryland," in Land, Society, and Politics in Early Maryland, ed. Aubrey C. Land, Lois Green Carr, and Edward C. Papenfuss (Baltimore, 1977), p. 97.

<sup>3</sup>Carr and Walsh, "The Planter's Wife," pp. 542, 552-554; Menard, "Immigrants and their Increase," pp. 92-95; Irene W. D. Hecht, "The Virginia Muster of 1624/5 as a Source for Demographic History," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d Ser., XXX (1973), p. 84.

<sup>4</sup>Darrett B. and Anita H. Rutman, "'Now-Wives and Sons-in-Law': Parental Death in a Seventeenth-Century Virginia County," in The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth-Century, ed. Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman (New York, 1979), p. 153.

<sup>5</sup>Rhys Isaac, The Transformation of Virginia (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1982), p. 73; Rutmans, "'Now-Wives and Sons-in-Law'," p. 169; Lorena S. Walsh, "'Till Death Us Do Part': Marriage and Family in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," in The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century, ed. Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman, (New York, 1979), pp. 132 & 144.

<sup>6</sup>William Waller Hening, ed. The Statutes at Large (New York, 1823), III, pp. 375-376.

<sup>7</sup>Carr and Walsh, "The Planter's Wife," p. 560; Daniel Blake Smith, "Mortality and Family in the Colonial Chesapeake," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, VIII (1977-1978), p. 426.

<sup>8</sup>Karin Calvert, "Children in American Family Portraiture, 1670-1810," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d Ser., XXXIX (1982), p. 94.

<sup>9</sup>Daniel Blake Smith, Inside the Great House: Planter Family Life in Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Society (Ithaca, N.Y., 1980), pp. 40-41

<sup>10</sup>William Fitzhugh to (Cousin) William Fitzhugh, 30 Jan. 1686/7, in Davis, ed. William Fitzhugh, p. 198.

<sup>11</sup>Carr and Walsh, "The Planter's Wife," p. 558; Rutmans, "'Now-Wives and Sons-in-Law'," p. 170.

<sup>12</sup>Philip Alexander Bruce, The Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century (New York, 1910), pp. 296, 316-317, 232.

<sup>13</sup>In general, children of the gentry could expect to enjoy a slightly longer period of dependence on their parents than children of a lesser social status. For example, in the Virginia muster of 1624/5, twenty children aged ten to fourteen were listed as servants, while sons and daughters of more genteel parents were recorded as children after the age of fourteen (Hecht, "The Virginia Muster," pp. 84-85).

<sup>14</sup>Walsh, "'Till Death Us Do Part'," p. 136.

<sup>15</sup>Rutmans, "'Now-Wives and Sons-in-Law,'" pp. 158-159, 170; Bernard Bailyn, "Politics and Social Structure in Virginia," in Seventeenth-Century America, ed. James Morton Smith (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1959), pp. 107-109.

<sup>16</sup>Menard, "Immigrants and their Increase," p. 101.

<sup>17</sup>Jan Lewis, "Domestic Tranquility and the Management of Emotions among the Gentry of Prerevolutionary Virginia," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d Ser., XXXIX (1982), pp. 36-37.

<sup>18</sup>Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 26-27; Julia Cherry Spruill, Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1938), pp. 46-47.

<sup>19</sup>Gerald W. Mullin, Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia (New York, 1972), pp. 19 & 23; Michael Zuckerman, "William Byrd's Family," Perspectives in American History, XII (1979), pp. 276-283.

<sup>20</sup>Zuckerman, "William Byrd's Family," pp. 288-289, 299-301.

<sup>21</sup>Lewis, "Domestic Tranquility," pp. 140-141, 145; Jan. Lewis, The Pursuit of Happiness: Family and Values in Jefferson's Virginia (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 36, 174-175.

<sup>22</sup>William Byrd to Charles Boyle, 5 July 1726, in The Correspondence of the Three William Byrds of Westover, Virginia, ed. Marion Tinling (Charlottesville, Va., 1977), p. 355.

<sup>23</sup>Spruill, Women's Life and Work, p. 344; Isaac, The Transformation, pp. 21-22; Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800 (New York, 1977), p. 152.

<sup>24</sup>Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 79-80; Spruill, Women's Life and Work, p. 55; Ruth H. Bloch, "American Feminine Ideals in Transition: The Rise of Moral Motherhood, 1785-1815," Feminist Studies, IV (1978), pp. 101, 104-107.

<sup>25</sup>Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800 (Boston, 1980), pp. 96-97; Spruill, Women's Life and Work, p. 45.

<sup>26</sup>17 March 1712, The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1709-1712, ed. Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling (Richmond, Va., 1941), p. 502.

<sup>27</sup>Spruill, Women's Life and Work, p. 55.

<sup>28</sup>Robert Carter to Micajah and Richard Perry, 14 July 1720, in Letters of Robert Carter, ed. Louis B. Wright (Berkeley, Calif., 1940), pp. 22-23.

<sup>29</sup>Philip Greven, The Protestant Temperament (New York, 1977), pp. 275-276.

<sup>30</sup>Virginia Gazette, 3 Sept. 1756.

<sup>31</sup>Edmund S. Morgan, Virginians at Home: Family Life in the Eighteenth Century (Williamsburg, Va., 1952), 10-14, 20-21; Greven, The Protestant Temperament, pp. 278-279.

<sup>32</sup>Betty Pratt to Keith William Pratt, 10 Aug. 1732, "The Jones Papers," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography XXVI (1918), p. 288.

<sup>33</sup>Robert Carter to William Dawkins, 14 July 1720, in Letters of Robert Carter, ed. Wright, p. 25.

<sup>34</sup>Isaac, The Transformation, pp. 76-77; Spruill, Women's Life and Work, pp. 202, 204-205.

<sup>35</sup>William Byrd to Evelyn Byrd, 20 July 1723, in Another Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, ed. Maude H. Woodfin (Richmond, Va., 1942), p. 382.

<sup>36</sup>Neil L. Shumsky, "Parents, Children, and the Selection of Mates in Colonial Virginia," Eighteenth-Century Life, II (1976), p. 85.

<sup>37</sup>Greven, The Protestant Temperament, p. 322.

<sup>38</sup>Shomer Zwelling, Draft of an article on the family of Councillor Robert Carter, Williamsburg, Va., 1982, p. 2.

## CHAPTER II

### REPUBLICAN CHILDREARING ON THE PLANTATION: PATTERNS OF GENTEEL PARENTING IN THE POST-REVOLUTIONARY CHESAPEAKE

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is  
old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

The coming of the Revolution brought a new ideology of childrearing to the Chesapeake and all America. Many of the Founding Fathers believed that the future of the new republic and the "training up" of the nation's children were intimately connected.<sup>1</sup> These leaders became interested in the traditionally female task of childrearing because of their conviction that the future of the republic depended on its ability to transform new generations of Americans into virtuous citizens. Hailed as the only "safe depository of the ultimate powers of society,"<sup>2</sup> virtuous citizenry occupied a high position in republican ideology. However, theorists agreed that before American citizens could successfully perform their vital role as guardians of liberty, they needed to acquire both virtue and intelligence. Therefore, several of the Founding Fathers endorsed a national childrearing effort to "convert [children] into republican machines."<sup>3</sup>

Republican leaders wanted American children to acquire virtue and knowledge in several specialized areas. The most

important virtues for young citizens were self-discipline and industry. Thus, parents reminded their children that indolence was the worst of all the "cankers of human happiness" and that "the American character...consider[ed] nothing as desperate,... [but] surmount[ed] every difficulty by resolution and contrivance."<sup>4</sup> The republicans also strove to give their offspring an "inviolable attachment to their own country," capable of inspiring these future citizens to serve in public office or to volunteer their lives in time of war.<sup>5</sup> Areas of knowledge required by republican children included training in the "general principles of legislation" and "all the prerogatives of the federal government."<sup>6</sup> Finally, republican leaders strongly recommended that children study history. Noah Webster praised American history for its patriotic value: "As soon as [a child]...opens his lips, he should rehearse the history of his own country; he should lisp the praise of liberty and of those illustrious heroes and statesmen who have wrought a revolution in her favor."<sup>7</sup> John Adams recommended the study of ancient history because "in Company with Sallust, Cicero, Tacitus and Livy, you will learn [the] Wisdom and Virtue [needed to become]...a good Man and a useful Citizen."<sup>8</sup> And Thomas Jefferson believed that training in history "by appraising [citizens]...of the past, will enable them to judge of the future;...it will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of men; it will enable them to know ambition under every disguise it may assume; and knowing it, to defeat its views."<sup>9</sup>

In order to instill special virtue and knowledge in their offspring, American parents required an appropriate method of

childrearing. This posed a problem because the traditional, patriarchal method of childrearing was no longer ideologically acceptable to many republican parents. These citizens recognized that "authoritarian monarchy and domestic patriarchy form[ed] a congruent and mutually supportive complex of ideas and social systems."<sup>10</sup> This relationship was familiar to Americans from John Locke's Two Treatises of Government, a work which attacked the powers of the king through an analogy of the abuses of an authoritarian father. American ideas on childrearing had also been altered by the colonies' changing relationship with England during the Revolutionary period. At the onset of the controversy, the colonists viewed themselves as contented and obedient children of England; however, they soon came to see themselves as "dutiful children, who have received unmerited blows from a beloved parent."<sup>11</sup> As the harsh treatment continued, the colonists became more critical of authoritarian parenthood, insisting that even if they were children, "have not children a right to complain when their parents are attempting to break their limbs, to administer poison, or to sell them to enemies for slaves?"<sup>12</sup>

With the Revolution came the Americans' final rejection of the political theory of royal absolutism and passive obedience, a rejection which further weakened the related theory of patriarchalism in the family. In its stead, the republicans sought a new style of childrearing, a style which would correspond to their new political ideology. Representative government



required a form of parenting that emphasized the individual and encouraged more egalitarian relationships within the family. To meet this need, republican parents turned, ironically, to the writings of English educators, primarily those of reformer John Locke.<sup>13</sup>

Born in 1632, John Locke contributed to a variety of fields including education, politics, medicine, and philosophy during his lifetime. In 1690, his defense of the Glorious Revolution, The Two Treatises of Government, accorded him recognition as the intellectual leader of Whiggism. Resting on a faith in the reasonable nature of man, Locke's work praised constitutional governments that were based on the consent of the governed and <sup>that</sup> guaranteed individual liberties.<sup>14</sup> Three years later, Locke turned his pen to parenting and published another influential work, <sup>this one</sup> entitled Some Thoughts Concerning Education. Although originally written for the son of a country gentleman, much of Locke's advice applied to all English children, and the work soon became popular throughout England, appearing in twenty-one editions during the eighteenth century.<sup>15</sup> During the first half of the century, Locke's philosophy of childrearing was further popularized by English educators, physicians, and printers. Arriving in America during the second half of the eighteenth century, these British manuals for parents gradually found receptive soil. Lockean childrearing appealed to many Americans because its philosophy of viewing each child as a unique individual who could be shaped into a rational, self-disciplined adult

corresponded ideologically with their republican tenets. Thus, during the postwar decades, American educators urged parents to adopt Lockean methodology for the upbringing of their children.<sup>16</sup>

Lockean childrearing methods obligated republican parents to preserve, educate, and nourish their children, treating each as evidence of the workmanship of God. Parents could not, however, hold a severe or arbitrary authority over their offspring. According to Locke, God gave parents power over their children only to ensure proper care during the "imperfect state of Childhood." Parental authority was a temporary condition, which "like the Swadling Cloths...[infants] are wrapt up in...loosen ...[and] drop quite off" with the advent of age and reason.<sup>17</sup> An early periodical, the American Museum, echoed this advice, urging parents to reject the traditions of the former age and to renounce childrearing by "mere dint of authority."<sup>18</sup>

Locke also insisted that parental authority be a shared responsibility between husband and wife. In America, this belief was quickly adopted by republican leaders who came to see motherhood "almost as if it were a fourth branch of government, a device that ensured social control in the gentlest possible way."<sup>19</sup> These men theorized that the powerful influence mothers held over their young could be harnessed to shape the morals and manners of each new generation of citizens. In particular, they hoped republican mothers could inspire their sons to become patriotic and civic-minded citizens.<sup>20</sup> Thus, mothers like Abigail Adams felt it their republican duty to

continually exhort their children to "improve your understanding for acquiring useful knowledge and virtue, such as to render you...an Honour to your Country."<sup>21</sup>

According to Lockean literature, the parents' first and greatest responsibility was to instill obedience and self-discipline in their offspring. This task was essential to success because Locke's entire philosophy centered on the belief that all "Vertue and Excellency lies in a Power of denying our selves the Satisfaction of our own Desires, where Reason does not authorize them."<sup>22</sup> Republican leaders readily shared this view, hoping early lessons in habitual obedience would create adult citizens willing to place the restraints of the law and the interests of society above their own desires.<sup>23</sup> However, the task of breaking a child's will was a sensitive one, for Locke feared that if children's "Spirits be abased and broken much, by too strict an Hand over them, they lose all their Vigor and Industry, and are in a worse State than the former."<sup>24</sup> American educators seconded this advice, warning parents to use "great judgement and delicacy" and to avoid "savage and barbarous" methods.<sup>25</sup> Instead of physical punishment, Locke proposed gently breaking a child's will by psychological means, primarily by employing esteem and disgrace, the two "most powerful Incentives to the Mind."<sup>26</sup> Parents were advised to begin this task early; the American Museum recommended that parents begin with infants of eight or nine months.<sup>27</sup> When, after several months, this task was successfully completed, parents could

gradually relax their control, allowing their children to advance from "obedient subjects" to "affectionate friends" as they reached maturity.<sup>28</sup>

After instilling obedience and self-discipline in their offspring, republican parents began the dual task of developing their children's bodies and minds. To achieve sound bodies, parents instructed their sons and daughters to adhere to a mild diet, physical exercise, moderate sleep, and habits of cleanliness.<sup>29</sup> Each child's health caused the greatest concern; thus, Henry Laurens warned his son James: "I cannot repeat too often my advice to wash your Mouth every Morning, Noon, and Night with Cold Water & to keep your Head clean."<sup>30</sup> To develop sound minds, Locke discouraged parents from stuffing their children's heads with an assortment of facts. Instead, he recommended that children learn to read at an early age in order to acquire ideas of their own. In America, the education of girls also increased in importance, thanks mainly to the new significance of republican motherhood.<sup>31</sup>

Finally, moral instruction was an important obligation for republican parents, so much so that one mother warned her son: "I had much rather you should have found your Grave in the ocean you have crossed, or any untimely death crop you in your Infant years, ... than see you an immoral profligate or a Graceless child."<sup>32</sup> In particular, parents encouraged Lockean habits of regularity, temperance, and industry, and reminded their children that "such is the Imperfection of human nature, there is a necessity for

continual self-denial, to govern our Temper, to regulate our passions, and to direct Conduct."<sup>33</sup> George Washington was often held up to republican children as a model of these virtues. In popular biographies written soon after his death in 1800, the father of the nation was depicted as a Lockean success story, a man who had acquired the necessary self-discipline in his childhood to sacrifice all for the long-term goal of national independence. Biographers also held up Washington's father as an example of republican parenthood. Supposedly, "Mr. Washington" considered physical punishment "barbaric" and educated George entirely by the Lockean principles of esteem and disgrace. "Never," a biographer asserted, "did the Wise Ulysses take more pains with his beloved Telemachus, than did Mr. Washington with George."<sup>34</sup>

The extent to which Americans adopted the alleged child-rearing style of "Mr. Washington" varied from region to region. In the Chesapeake, members of the upper class were especially receptive to many aspects of republican childrearing ideology. Their response resulted both from the planters' patriotic sentiments and from recent trends in the evolution of planter families. For several decades the structure of the genteel Chesapeake family had been undergoing a transformation away from the extended, emotionally restrained patriarchy of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Causes of this trend included the decline of the mortality rate, the availability of cheap western lands, the impact of republican ideology, and the

existence of corresponding trends in the government and society. By the Revolutionary period some members of the gentry were also already familiar with Locke's childrearing ideology, perhaps as a result of the region's close commercial and educational ties with England.<sup>35</sup> Thus, by the early national period, the genteel Chesapeake family emerged as a nuclear, less patriarchal, more affectionate institution open to new modes of childrearing.<sup>36</sup>

Once open and extended, the planter family gradually evolved into a nuclear living arrangement after the Revolution. This development was in part a reflection of the wealthy slave owner's need for a retreat, a sanctuary from the business world which appeared increasingly "cold, hostile, and competitive."<sup>37</sup> Within his home, the southern planter desired both privacy from the outside world and an affectionate, more emotional environment. The desire for privacy was apparent in the new design of plantation homes with private dining rooms and additional hallways and individual rooms and in the exclusion of all but immediate family members from the household.<sup>38</sup> The greater affection and emotional involvement between family members also provided the planter with a source of comfort and strength.<sup>39</sup> This emotional development is apparent from the increasingly child-centered and inward direction of the family. Planters' letters reveal many examples of this trend toward parental tenderness. "God bless you my dear Child!" wrote George Mason in one such letter. "Your Prosperity & Happiness will ever be the Prayer of your affectionate father."<sup>40</sup> Parents also began to consider their children first

in important decisions. For example, widower Henry Laurens declined to remarry, having "no desire to hazard an alienation of my affections from our Children by a Second Marriage."<sup>41</sup>

The increasingly child-centered focus of the Chesapeake planter family did not indicate the absence of a familial hierarchy, it simply implied a more complex and less obvious internal structure. The position of the father was perhaps the most altered after the Revolution, primarily by the presence of a more democratic national outlook. As the head of a household, the paternal position still carried prestige and honor in the Chesapeake, but no longer the absolute authority it once commanded. Instead, fathers now became an important source of affection for their young, and paternal government was more often conducted by setting an appropriate example for children than by issuing orders.<sup>42</sup> Chesapeake mothers also held new positions in the family hierarchy after the Revolution. During the War, many of these women had acted as temporary heads of their households, and this experience, combined with the new expectations for republican mothers, enabled them to take on new responsibilities in the family. In particular, mothers now played a more influential role in the upbringing of their sons. However, because of the segregation of southern plantations and the chivalric code of southern society, the concepts of republican motherhood made fewer inroads in the Chesapeake than in the North. Gradually the southern ideal of a republican mother evolved into the restricting notion of pure and chaste womanhood, and the Chesapeake mother again became more ornamental than influential.<sup>43</sup>

Young children were also regarded in a different light after the Revolution. For the first time in the Chesapeake, parents recognized early childhood as more than a step in the attainment of adulthood and young children as more than "unfinished, imperfect adults."<sup>44</sup> Instead, parents came to see childhood as a unique and worthy stage of life and to appreciate the amusing and playful characteristics of their youngsters. Family portraits from the last quarter of the eighteenth century reveal planter children dressed for the first time in a distinct style of clothing, posing with pony whips, marbles, hoops, and dolls, all evidence of a new perception of childhood.<sup>45</sup> Parents also began referring to their children in playful terms in their letters, calling them "monkeys," "toads," "pugs," and "little cherubs."<sup>46</sup> With the rise of this new outlook, Chesapeake parents came to regard their children as infinite sources of amusement and entertainment and to write detailed accounts of their daily lives. For example, John Marshall described his daughter Mary as "one of the most fascinating creatures I ever beheld....She talks in a way not easily to be understood tho she comprehends very well every thing that is said to her & is the most coquetish little prude & the most prudish little coquette I ever saw."<sup>47</sup> And when Martha Jefferson Randolph apologized to her father that "a fond Mother never knows where to stop [writing] when her children [are]...the subject," Thomas Jefferson responded that he read about his grandchildren "with quite as much pleasure as you write it."<sup>48</sup> However, in all the many references to children and childrearing in the post-Revolutionary letters of planter



parents, one issue is noticeably absent: unlike their northern counterparts, Chesapeake parents revealed little fear of spoiling their offspring.<sup>49</sup>

After the Revolution, reports of an increase in parental indulgence and a decrease in discipline circulated throughout the new nation. Foreign observers were quick to note a new independent and "republican" manner in American children.<sup>50</sup>

Bemoaned the American Museum in 1788, "we have gone in this nation in general, from one extreme to the very utmost limits of the other...[and] now...not only severity, but authority is often decried."<sup>51</sup> Critics charged that this trend was especially pronounced among southern planters, complaining as early as 1773 that "children [in the Chesapeake] are no longer so respectful & dutiful as they ought to be, & as they used to be."<sup>52</sup> Northern and southern middle-class observers considered genteel children unruly, vain, arrogant, and spoiled in clothing and diet.<sup>53</sup> All of these accusations raise questions about the prominence of Lockean childrearing techniques in the Chesapeake--namely, how fully did the planters adopt Locke's precepts on the need to break their offsprings' wills, and how successfully did they follow them?

Several aspects of life in the Chesapeake offer a partial explanation for the apparent indulgence by planter parents. The presence of slave nurses was perhaps the most important of these, for it freed the gentry from the daily responsibilities of parenthood. Under the care of a slave nurse, planter children received nourishment, affection, discipline, and even occasional protection

from an angry parent. In short, the "ubiquitous black mammy" often served as the children's second, more attentive and loving mother. Blissfully unaware of Lockean principles, the nurse did not perceive an urgent need to break the wills of her white wards. Instead, she more often strove to keep her charges satisfied and contented. For this reason, American educators universally condemned the use of servants as nurses, warning that their laxity could ruin a child.<sup>54</sup>

The indulgent treatment children received from their nurse was often repeated by their parents. During the short periods spent with their offspring, genteel parents naturally preferred to relax and enjoy their company than to begin a rigorous battle to subdue their youngsters' "passions." In addition to the demands of time and energy, many Chesapeake parents were uncertain about the desirability of breaking a child's will. Living in an increasingly deistic or secular culture, the genteel parents of the Chesapeake did not view their children as sinful beings endowed with dangerous wills. Instead, the planters actually valued signs of assertiveness or willfulness in their progeny. Thus, Martha Jefferson Randolph boasted that her daughter "little Anne...becomes every day more mischievous and entertaining."<sup>55</sup> Many planter parents took pride in their children's noisiness and stubbornness; some even encouraged fighting and yelling as signs of aggressive behavior. In contrast to the mode of child-rearing in northern and more religious southern families, the Chesapeake planter elite made little effort to break or even bend the wills of their children, concentrating instead, perhaps,

on breaking those of their slaves.<sup>56</sup> Thus, while adopting the general ideology of republican childrearing, the genteel planters of the Chesapeake also adapted some of its methodology to suit their regional life-style.

To raise assertive, independent adults, parents in the Chesapeake developed a modified style of Lockean methodology which allowed their children greater freedom and affection. Parents shared Locke's interest in sound bodies, paying close attention to their children's strength and coordination.<sup>57</sup> More importantly, the planters attempted to employ the educator's techniques of esteem and disgrace by offering parental affection for good behavior and withholding it for bad. "Be good, and consequently [you will]...be<sup>bec</sup> loved, and...make us happy," planters encouraged their young. However, disobedient children were warned that now "we should not love you so much." Thus, parents strove to achieve discipline by appealing to their children's emotions.<sup>58</sup>

During their early years, Chesapeake children received two conflicting messages from their parents. The modified Lockean style of parenting stressed both assertiveness and obedience, personal autonomy and deference to authority. This inherent conflict was resolved by the children's acceptance of the demands of honor in southern society. In the Chesapeake during the early republic, the concept of honor was much more than a vague myth; it constituted both the support system for the hierarchies of the family and community and the framework for resolving social problems within these institutions. At an

early age, Chesapeake children unconsciously integrated this concept of honor into their code of daily life. Therefore, when a child's assertiveness met with a parental demand for obedience, the awareness that honor required a showing of filial duty resolved the child's dilemma. Interestingly, while not based on religious principles, this code of honor produced similar behavior in planter children as the inculcation of a godly conscience did in children from more evangelical households.<sup>59</sup>

As planter children passed through early childhood, their freedom and mobility increased. No longer under a servant's direct supervision, the open plantation became their playground. The plantation also provided instant playmates; slave and planter children often romped and roamed together until work, school, or puberty brought an end to their frolics. Earlier, the black and white youngsters spent long hours at games, fishing, hunting, berry picking, and other amusements, their differences in color temporarily overshadowed by their similarities of youth.<sup>60</sup> However, during these same carefree years, planter offspring also experienced an integral aspect of their upbringing, a development so slow and uneventful as to go unnoticed in their daily lives. Gradually, the universal process of socialization transformed this select group of Chesapeake children into genteel adults with a unique outlook and values.

One of the earliest elements of this socialization occurred in the rigid development of sex roles. Children soon learned that their parents praised strength and activeness in their sons, but preferred passive and charming daughters. Thus, while

sons received approval for their boisterous play, daughters were gradually weaned away from vigorous activities to sit in the company of their dolls or to observe their mothers' domestic duties. This trend reached its peak when the children became teenagers. Then, at an age when most daughters were encouraged to be obedient "little women," sons received a horse of their own and permission to wander far afield. In short, socialization taught independence to planter sons and dependence to their sisters.<sup>61</sup>

Discipline was a sporadic element of planter children's socialization during these years. Most parents preferred persuasion over physical force as a means of correction. However, when persuasion failed, parents usually prescribed corporal punishment. While planter daughters seldom felt the strap, genteel sons usually grew up familiar with its sting. Fathers seldom carried out this sentence themselves; instead, they retained their affectionate image by giving a tutor or servant the task. Perhaps the most important effect of physical punishment on the young southern planter was his gradual acceptance of this form of violence as a social vehicle for enforcing obedience.<sup>62</sup>

Acceptance of slavery was another important factor in the socialization of planter children. Given early love and care by black surrogate mothers and easy friendship with young slaves, the planter child's first relationship with slaves was likely to be a series of deep emotional attachments. However, sometime during childhood a transformation appears to have occurred,

a transformation from affectionate ward or peer to genteel slave owner. And yet, because slavery in the Chesapeake was a complex paternal institution where kindness and affection coexisted with cruelty and hatred, the planter child's transition to slave owner did not involve a complete transformation. Familiar with the kindness and affectionate, young planters next learned to recognize and to accept the plantation hierarchy. Perhaps as a defense mechanism, during this process many children developed a sense of detachment from the cruelties inherent in this hierarchy.<sup>63</sup>

Planter children learned the facts of slavery primarily by observation. While some parents tried to instill an attitude of noblesse oblige in their offspring, children usually received instruction in slave management by viewing their parents enforcing authority on the plantation. Equally powerful was the sight of the slaves' outwardly deferential and obedient response to this treatment. After observing this interaction, the next step in the making of a slave owner was the child's first experimental attempts at power; before age ten many children began to imitate their parents' behavior with their own black companions. This early effort at authority was seldom criticized by parents; instead, older children, especially sons, received explicit command over select slaves. Thomas Jefferson voiced the fears of a few southern parents, primarily mothers, who were disturbed by their children's early familiarity with power: "The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives...loose to his worst...passions, and [is] thus nursed, educated, and daily

exercised in tyranny." However, most Chesapeake parents probably chose not to think too deeply about this less than republican aspect of childrearing. In a society that valued aggressive behavior, it seemed natural for the children of slave owners to mirror their parents' traits.<sup>64</sup>

In contrast, the children's acquisition of social graces was a favorite parental concern. "I am delighted with the account you give...of...John's good breeding," John Marshall wrote approvingly to his wife, Polly, in 1800.<sup>65</sup> This "good breeding" represented a number of different qualities in the Chesapeake. In a very literal sense, it referred to the child's lineage. Thus, genteel children were led through the limbs of their family trees and taught to venerate the memory of a host of ancestors. One common means of keeping the memory of these forefathers alive was through the use of distinguished surnames as the children's first names. More importantly, however, good breeding meant the acquisition of genteel social behavior. Sociability or affability was one of the most striking characteristics of the southern gentry. To be sociable, children needed to learn proper manners, display evidence of formal learning, and possess sufficient cultural talents including artistic or musical ability. It also meant attending church, not necessarily out of any deep religious conviction but as a social function and as a means of maintaining order in the community.<sup>66</sup>

Instruction in good breeding also included lessons on attaining "virtue." During the last quarter of the eighteenth

century, parents in the Chesapeake placed special emphasis on the republican virtues of self-discipline and self-improvement as the means of achieving personal success. However, independence was probably the most important virtue that parents struggled to instill in their young. In Chesapeake society, "independence" usually translated into "economic independence." Living in constant fear of debt, planters in the early republic worried that unless their offspring learned to refrain from extravagant spending and indulgent behavior, they would quickly squander their inheritance and their families' fortunes. However, this lesson proved a difficult one for many planter children who came to view work as the task of slaves and industry as an element of the dreaded Yankee spirit. Thus, the letters of planter parents contain many warnings about extravagance ("never buy any thing which you have not money in your pocket to pay for") and idleness ("for God's Sake, make not amusement the business of your life").<sup>67</sup>

Although parents encouraged sociability, self-discipline, and self-improvement in both their sons and daughters, in many more ways boys and girls received different instructions for attaining good breeding and virtue. For example, while genteel sons were expected to be proud, aggressive, independent, courageous, and chivalrous, their sisters soon learned they could only win affection and approval by submitting entirely to those in authority. "Never suffer yourself to be angry with any body," Thomas Jefferson advised his daughter Polly, "[but rather] do whatever any body desires of you."<sup>68</sup> And Alicia Shippen



warned her daughter, Nancy, at boarding school: "never make mischief but rather when any of [your school-fellows]...fall into a scrape try...to bring them off."<sup>69</sup> The parental message was clear: daughters should be obedient, compliant, meek, and modest. Parents also urged their daughters to present a pleasing physical appearance and to dress "in such a stile as...[to] be seen by any gentleman without his being able to discover a pin amiss."<sup>70</sup> Therefore, early on daughters learned never to compete for their brothers' honors, but rather to seek honor vicariously by encouraging male relations in their activities.<sup>71</sup>

Formal education was another universal concern of planter parents. After the Revolution, perhaps as a result of the family's increasingly affectionate and child-centered orientation, parents frequently chose to educate their children at home for as long as possible. Until their early teens, the children often received instruction from tutors who were also responsible for providing moral guidance and discipline. Following this instruction, planter sons, along with a growing number of daughters, left home for further education at private schools and colleges. During their early education both boys and girls studied reading, writing, arithmetic, and often geography, history, and science. The gentry also valued the study of languages, especially the classics, as evidence of good breeding. Boys often received additional instruction in oratory, a necessary accomplishment for success in the fields of law, government, education, or the church. While daughters continued to receive more training in the social graces than their brothers, the new

republican emphasis on well-educated mothers led to improvements in their formal education during this period. Subsequently, many fathers took an increased interest in their daughters' educations, correctly perceiving that success in this area could help compensate for a poor dowry.<sup>72</sup>

As planter children came of age, one final parental obligation remained. Parents in the Chesapeake felt a strong duty to provide both their sons and daughters with an inheritance upon adulthood. This money or property, fairly equally divided among the children, was necessary to ensure the economic independence of the sons and at least a degree of economic security for the daughters. However, unlike earlier generations, parents no longer had the responsibility of selecting their children's spouses; instead, their republican offspring insisted on choosing their own mates. Parents seldom interfered in these matters, usually frowning only if a daughter's choice lacked economic prospects. Once their adult children were established, parents hoped that their childhood lessons in self-reliance and good breeding would enable them to maintain economic independence and good standing in the gentry community. Then the tables could turn and parents look to their children for economic assistance and care in their old age.<sup>73</sup>

How well did the Chesapeake planters follow the new republican ideology of childrearing designed to raise virtuous and intelligent citizens? These parents shared the republican interest in education and in the development of sound bodies. They also stressed the attainment of "virtue." However, to the planters, "virtue" implied those qualities valued by Chesapeake

society: economic independence, personal autonomy, assertiveness, affability, and adherence to the southern code of honor. While raising their offspring, southern planters followed a modified version of Lockean methodology. Becoming more affectionate and less authoritarian, they employed the Lockean techniques of esteem and disgrace to command respect and obedience. However, Chesapeake parents placed less emphasis on the need to break their children's wills--or at least the wills of their sons--during early childhood. Instead, boys were encouraged to be assertive and independent. In contrast, parents did break the wills of their daughters, not rapidly during early childhood as Locke advised, but slowly, almost imperceptibly, over the course of their childhood. By internalizing their parents' limited perception of the female role, daughters became submissive and tractable.

While historians know that the process of socialization shapes a child's attitudes and patterns of behavior and thought,<sup>74</sup> the historical results of a particular style of childrearing must remain speculative. In the Chesapeake of the early republic, conflicting hypotheses describe the impact of planter parenting methods on succeeding generations. According to one theory, planter offspring emerged from a childhood of loving attention and freedom as self-confident, self-reliant adults capable of strong affection and emotion.<sup>75</sup> However, a second interpretation insists that two decades of indulgence and neglect produced adults characterized by idleness, instability, and a predisposition to violence.<sup>76</sup> Since each represents an

extreme view, the truth may lie in some elusive combination of the two. While few have speculated about the specific impact of the upbringing of planter daughters, clearly these girls adopted their parents' limited vision of women, casting themselves in supporting roles. However, society's new emphasis on republican motherhood made these roles more attractive than in the past by providing a greater outlet for female energy and creativity.

Like all ideology, that of childrearing has a dynamic and dialectical relationship with existing social institutions.<sup>77</sup> Throughout America, the adoption of republican childrearing techniques corresponded with the culmination of century-long trends toward equality in the family, the government, and the society. The new modes of childrearing both reflected and reinforced these trends. However, in the Chesapeake, trends toward social equality were overshadowed by the continued predominance of a hierarchical class structure based on slavery. While raising their offspring to be virtuous republican citizens, planter parents also prepared them to maintain this hierarchy as new members of the slave-owning elite. Thus, in the Chesapeake, the post-Revolutionary pattern of childrearing represented the planters' unique response to three social institutions: the more affectionate and child-centered family, the republican national government, and the hierarchy of plantation society.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>Jacqueline S. Reinier, "Rearing the Republican Child: Attitudes and Practices in Post-Revolutionary Philadelphia," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d Ser., XXXIX (1982), p. 150.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Jefferson to William C. Jarvis, 28 Sept. 1820, in Crusade Against Ignorance: Thomas Jefferson on Education, ed. Gordon C. Lee (New York, 1961), p. 7.

<sup>3</sup>Benjamin Rush, "Some Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," in Essays on Education in the Early Republic, ed. Frederick Rudolph (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas Jefferson to Martha Jefferson, 28 March 1787, in The Family Letters of Thomas Jefferson, ed. Edwin Morris Betts and James Adam Bear Jr. (Columbia, Mo., 1966), pp. 34 & 35.

<sup>5</sup>Noah Webster, "On the Education of Youth in America," in Essays on Education, p. 45; Rush "Some Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education," pp. 14-15.

<sup>6</sup>Rush, "Some Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education," p. 20.

<sup>7</sup>Webster, "On the Education of Youth," p. 65.

<sup>8</sup>John Adams to John Quincy Adams, 18 May 1781, in Adams Family Correspondence, ed. L. H. Butterfield and Marc Friedlaender (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), IV, p. 117.

<sup>9</sup>Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia," in Crusade Against Ignorance, p. 96.

<sup>10</sup>Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England (New York, 1977), p. 152.

<sup>11</sup>John Dickenson, quoted in Edwin G. Burrows and Michael Wallace, "The American Revolution: The Ideology and Psychology of National Liberation," Perspectives in American History, IV (1972), pp. 193-194.

<sup>12</sup>John Adams, quoted in Burrows and Adams, "The American Revolution," p. 194.

<sup>13</sup>Reinier, "Rearing the Republican Child," pp. 150, 162; John F. Walzer, "A Period of Ambivalence: Eighteenth-Century American Childhood," in The History of Childhood, ed. Lloyd de Mause (New York, 1974), p. 374.

<sup>14</sup>Thomas I. Cook, "Introduction," in Two Treatises of Government, by John Locke (New York, 1974), pp. viii-x.

<sup>15</sup>James L. Axtell, The Educational Writings of John Locke (London, 1968), pp. 4-5, 17, 51-52.

<sup>16</sup>Reinier, "Rearing the Republican Child," pp. 150-151, 154, 162. According to Jay Fliegelman, the basic argument of Locke's Education was familiar to a "significantly large portion of the literate colonial population on the eve of the Revolution." Americans also read a variety of novels glorifying Lockean methodology and criticizing parental tyranny; see Fliegelman, Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800 (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 38-39, 27-37, 39-40.

<sup>17</sup>John Locke, Two Treatises of Government, ed. Peter Laslett (London, 1960), pp. 323, 324, 322.

<sup>18</sup>"A Series of Letters on Education," American Museum, VI (1788), 110.

<sup>19</sup>Linda Kerber, Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1980), p. 200.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 283; Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800 (Boston, 1980), pp. 247-248; Reinier, "Rearing the Republican Child," p. 158.

<sup>21</sup>Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, 10? June 1778, in Adams Family Correspondence, III, pp. 37-38.

<sup>22</sup>Axtell, The Educational Writings, p. 143.

<sup>23</sup>Reinier, "Rearing the Republican Child," p. 158.

<sup>24</sup>Axtell, The Educational Writings, p. 148.

<sup>25</sup>"A Series of Letters," p. 110.

<sup>26</sup>Axtell, The Educational Writings, pp. 152-153.

<sup>27</sup>"A Series of Letters," p. 111.

<sup>28</sup>Axtell, The Educational Writings, p. 145.

<sup>29</sup>Rush, "Some Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education," p. 15.

<sup>30</sup>Henry Laurens to James Lauren, 6 Nov. 1774, in The Papers of Henry Laurens, ed. Philip M. Hamer (Columbia, S.C., 1968), IX, pp. 632-633.

<sup>31</sup>Axtell, The Educational Writings, pp. 58-59, 255; Ruth H. Bloch, "American Feminine Ideals in Transition: The Rise of Moral Motherhood, 1785-1815," Feminist Studies, IV (1978), p. 115.

<sup>32</sup>Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, 10 June 1778, in Adams Family Correspondence, III, pp. 37-38.

<sup>33</sup>James Iredell to Helen Blair, 11 June 1779, in The Papers of James Iredell, ed. Don Higginbotham (Raleigh, N.C., 1976), pp. 87-88.

<sup>34</sup>Reinier, "Rearing the Republican Child," p. 156; Mason L. Weems, The Life of Washington, ed. Marcus Cunliffe (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p. 10. For a discussion of the relationship between the glorification of Washington and the glorification of the "new parenthood" see Fliegelman, Prodigals and Pilgrims, pp. 199-200.

<sup>35</sup>Thomas Jefferson to Robert Skipwith, 3 Aug. 1771, in A Virginia Gentleman's Library (Colonial Williamsburg publication, 1952), pp. 13, 15; Daniel Blake Smith, Inside the Great House: Planter Family Life in Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Society (Ithaca, N.Y., 1980), pp. 47-49; Burrows and Wallace, "The American Revolution," p. 264-265.

<sup>36</sup>Donald M. Scott and Bernard Wishy, "A Sense of Order and the Challenge of Disorder," in American Families: A Documentary History (New York, 1982), pp. 7-8; Shomer Zwelling, Draft of an article on the family of Councillor Robert Carter, Williamsburg, Va., 1982, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup>Russel Lindley Blake, "Ties of Intimacy: Social Values and Personal Relationships of Antebellum Slaveholders" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1978), p. 48.

<sup>38</sup>Rhys Isaac, The Transformation of Virginia (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1982), pp. 302-305.

<sup>39</sup>Blake, "Ties of Intimacy," pp. 54-55; Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 42-43; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South (New York, 1982), pp. 130-131.

<sup>40</sup>George Mason to John Mason, 12 June 1788, in The Papers of George Mason, ed. Robert A. Rutland (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1970), III, p. 1073; Smith, Inside the Great House, p. 40. For additional examples of parental tenderness, see Betts, ed., Family Letters of Jefferson, and Ethel Armes, ed., Nancy Shippen Her Journal Book (Philadelphia, 1935). One result of this increase in parental tenderness was that in contrast to earlier periods fathers now displayed deep grief at the death of a child. See, for example, Peyton Skipwith to St. George Tucker, 23 Feb. 1792, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Swem Library, College of William and Mary.

<sup>41</sup>Philip M. Hamer, "Introduction," in The Papers of Henry Laurens, pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>42</sup>Norton, Liberty's Daughters, pp. 236-238; Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 52-53; Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor, pp. 66-68.

<sup>43</sup>Catherine Clinton, "Equally Their Due: The Education of the Planter Daughter in the Early Republic," Journal of the Early Republic, II (1982), pp. 39-40, 58-59; Norton, Liberty's Daughters, pp. 247-249, 228; Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 103-104.

<sup>44</sup>Karin Calvert, "Children in American Family Portraiture, 1670-1810," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d Ser., XXXIX (1982), p. 112.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., pp. 105-111.

<sup>46</sup>Norton, Liberty's Daughters, p. 92; Martha Jefferson Randolph to Thomas Jefferson, 27 Feb. 1793, in Family Letters of Jefferson, p. 112.

<sup>47</sup>John Marshall to Polly Marshall, 18 Aug. 1798, in My Dearest Polly: Letters of Chief Justice John Marshall to his Wife, ed. Frances North Mason (Richmond, Va., 1961), p. 121.

<sup>48</sup>Martha Jefferson Randolph to Thomas Jefferson, 16 Jan. 1793, and Thomas Jefferson to Martha Jefferson Randolph, 26 Jan. 1793, in Family Letters of Jefferson, pp. 109, 110.

<sup>49</sup>Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 50-52. See also the Virginia Gazette, 12 Mar. 1767.

<sup>50</sup>Daniel H. Calhoun, The Intelligence of a People (Princeton, N.J., 1973), p. 198.

<sup>51</sup>"A Series of Letters," pp. 108-109.

<sup>52</sup>Jonathon Boucher to George Germaine, 27 Nov. 1775, in "Letters of the Reverend Jonathon Boucher," Maryland Historical Magazine, VIII (1913), pp. 253-254.

<sup>53</sup>Philip Greven, The Protestant Temperament (New York, 1977), p. 269.

<sup>54</sup>John W. Blassingame, The Slave Community (New York, 1972), p. 167; Smith, Inside the Great House, p. 49; "A Series of Letters," pp. 108-109.

<sup>55</sup>Martha Jefferson Randolph to Thomas Jefferson, 20 Feb. 1792, in Family Letters of Jefferson, pp. 94-95.

<sup>56</sup>Greven, The Protestant Temperament, pp. 274, 277; Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 40-44, 50-51; Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor, pp. 138, 143.

<sup>57</sup>Smith, Inside the Great House, p. 47

<sup>58</sup>James Iredell to Helen Blair, 17 July 1774, in Papers of



Iredell, pp. 243-244; Thomas Jefferson to Martha Jefferson, 20 Sept. 1785, in Family Letters of Jefferson, pp. 29-30; Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 86-87, 93, 286.

<sup>59</sup>Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 85-86; Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor, pp. 64, 114, 129-130.

<sup>60</sup>Blassingame, Slave Community, p. 95; Eugene D. Genovese, Roll Jordan Roll (New York, 1972), pp. 515-517; Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor, pp. 153-154.

<sup>61</sup>Calvert, "Children in Portraiture," p. 111; Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 56-59, 84.

<sup>62</sup>Clinton, "Equally Their Due," p. 54; Greven, The Protestant Temperament, pp. 278-279, 281; Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 111-112.

<sup>63</sup>Genovese, Roll Jordan Roll, pp. 4-5; Blassingame, Slave Community, p. 168.

<sup>64</sup>Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, ed. William Peden (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1955), p. 162; Blassingame, Slave Community, p. 168; Genovese, Roll Jordan Roll, p. 598; Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 83-85; Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor, p. 152.

<sup>65</sup>John Marshall to Polly Marshall, 8 Aug. 1800, in My Dearest Polly, p. 142.

<sup>66</sup>Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor, pp. 120-122; 88-90, 101.

<sup>67</sup>Blake, "Ties of Intimacy," pp. 15, 20; Jan Ellen Lewis Grimmelmann, "This World and the Next: Religion, Death, Success, and Love in Jefferson's Virginia" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1977), pp. 226, 256; Jan Lewis, The Pursuit of Happiness: Family and Values in Jefferson's Virginia (Cambridge, 1983), p. 110; Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 97, 99-100; Thomas Jefferson to Martha Jefferson, 14 June 1787, in Family Letters of Jefferson, p. 43; James Iredell to Helen Blair, 11 June 1779, in Papers of Iredell, p. 89.

<sup>68</sup>Thomas Jefferson to Mary Jefferson, 20 Sept. 1785, in Family Letters of Jefferson, pp. 29-30.

<sup>69</sup>Alicia Shippen to Nancy Shippen, [1777], in Armes, ed. Shippen Journal Book, pp. 39-40.

<sup>70</sup>Thomas Jefferson to Martha Jefferson, 22 Dec. 1783, in Family Letters of Jefferson, p. 22.

<sup>71</sup>Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor, pp. 173-174. An example of this attitude is found in Nancy Shippen's "Directions concerning

a Daughters Education," rule 11: "If she be a brisk witty child do not applaud her too much" (Armes, ed., Shippen Journal Book, p. 148).

<sup>72</sup>Clinton, "Equally Their Due," p. 57; Richard Beale Davis, Intellectual Life in Jefferson's Virginia (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1964), pp. 364-365; Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 61-65, 105-108.

<sup>73</sup>Grimmelmann, "This World and the Next," pp. 169, 277-278; Smith, Inside the Great House, pp. 121-123.

<sup>74</sup>Axtell, The Educational Writings, p. 19.

<sup>75</sup>See Greven, Protestant Temperament, especially p. 247; and Smith, Inside the Great House, for two examples of the well-adjusted planter thesis.

<sup>76</sup>See Grimmelmann, "This World and the Next," especially p. 177; and Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor, for two examples of the mal-adjusted planter thesis. Jan Lewis Grimmelmann reiterates this statement in her new book; see Lewis, The Pursuit of Happiness, pp. 120, 122.

<sup>77</sup>James A. Henretta, The Evolution of American Society, 1700-1815 (Lexington, Mass., 1973), p. 157.

### CHAPTER III

#### REPUBLICAN CHILDREARING IN THE CHESAPEAKE:

#### A STUDY OF THE TUCKER FAMILY

I was brought up among people who despised kings...and disclaimed authority of all sorts except the authority of laws emanating from the majority of the people for the time being.

Nathaniel Beverley Tucker

Nathaniel Beverley Tucker belonged to a new generation of American children, the offspring of republican citizens. He and siblings Fanny, Henry, and Tudor and half siblings Richard, Theodorick, and John were brought up by patriotic parents who were directly involved in the Revolution and postwar government.<sup>1</sup> Beverley's father, St. George Tucker, married the boy's mother, Frances Bland Randolph Tucker, a widow with three young sons, shortly before the Revolution. During the war St. George served as an officer in the militia, while Frances worked to preserve their plantations and to protect their growing family from raiding British soldiers. After the war the Tuckers remained deeply committed to the new republic, and St. George became a judge and law professor. As Nathaniel Beverley Tucker perceived, the Tuckers' patriotism and republicanism formed an important part of the family's daily life. However, in order to discover whether the Tuckers raised their children according to the model

of republican childrearing, it is necessary to look beyond the Tuckers' new political ideology to the structure of the family and the style of parenting they practiced.

Toward the end of the war St. George wrote longingly to his wife Frances: "Nothing is so dear to my heart as that happiness which I promise myself with you and our little ones, when the destruction of our savage Enemies will permit me to return home to the uninterrupted Enjoyment of the Felicity which awaits me there."<sup>2</sup> The familial sanctuary St. George yearned for was representative of the new style of family emerging among the Chesapeake elite in the second half of the eighteenth century: nuclear, intimate, and affectionate. Despite the traditional complex composition of the Tucker family, which included step- and half siblings, the Tucker parents strove to unite their large household emotionally, treating the children with equal attention and affection. For example, in his war-time letters to Frances, St. George wrote: "Remember me with a tenderness truely parental to my Boys," a term he often used for his stepsons.<sup>3</sup> Like other eighteenth-century planters, St. George sought to make his home a haven from the larger world and warned his children that he had "often been unhappy...to observe a perfect animosity prevailing between children of the same parents," adding that he "should [not] be surprised if the person who is daily at variance with his Brother, should beat his father, or suffer his mother to pine in indigine."<sup>4</sup>

Within the family, St. George and Frances displayed the new

parental traits seen among many mothers and fathers at the close of the eighteenth century. St. George was less authoritarian and more affectionate than previous generations of Chesapeake fathers. His letters to and from the children reveal the closeness between them and the genuine pleasure that St. George received from their company. While serving in the army he wrote Frances: "I anticipate the pleasure I shall have in answering the thousand Questions which [the children's]...curiosity will prompt them to ask in my Return," adding "my poor little monkies are insensible to all that a parent can feel for them."<sup>5</sup> And after the death of the Tuckers' young son Tudor, St. George's sister Eliza warned his wife, "long--very long--must a heart like his be affected by such an event."<sup>6</sup>

For her part, Frances held more familial authority than earlier mothers had and was considered "a most excellent manager" of her family and, during wartime, of their plantations.<sup>7</sup> On the plantation she had particular responsibility for the management of the slaves, and thus when her brother, Theodorick Bland, wished to buy one of the Tuckers' slaves, he addressed his inquiry to Frances, explaining that "[these] offers...perhaps would have been with more propriety made to Mr. Tucker--but he informed me that the proposal of hiring or buying [slaves] came from you."<sup>8</sup> In contrast to seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century mothers who held their greatest influence over their daughters, Frances played a major role in the lives of her sons, who asked her: "What should we be behest of you? helpless vagabonds!"<sup>9</sup>

The final important members of the Tucker household were the children. However, because of the dangers inherent in child-birth in the eighteenth century, pregnancy was not a time for rejoicing. Instead, after one of Frances's pregnancies, a friend wrote: "Your situation seem'd to call more for my sympathy and tenderness," and described Frances's mood as "uneasy and languid, groaning under the weight of a heavy burden,...your Spirits depressed from apprehensions of the approaching event."<sup>10</sup> Pregnancy was referred to as a "Nine Months Scrape," and everyone was greatly relieved each time Frances "escaped the Dangers of Child-Birth."<sup>11</sup>

Congratulatory letters from friends and relatives reveal that the safe arrival of a new baby was cause for celebration in the Tucker household. The birth of the Tuckers' first baby, Anne Frances or Fanny, inspired one enthusiastic friend to write: "I know not in what words to express my Pleasure--my Joy--my Rapture--Rapture I say because I know it would be Rapture to thee."<sup>12</sup> And after the birth of St. George's second son, Tudor, a friend wrote: "I cannot help believing, protestations and your Declaration...to the contrary, that you feel as much joy on the Occasion as any Frenchman could pretend to on the birth of the Dauphin."<sup>13</sup> The new babies were "lovely Image[s]" of their parents, and Frances and St. George were to expect "additional Happiness in every Increase of family."<sup>14</sup>

The Tuckers obviously doted on their little ones, and letters between husband and wife, as well as to friends and relatives,

were filled with references to the "little chickens," "little prattlers," "little tribe," "rogues," and "sweet brats." Topics of interest included teething, weaning from a wet nurse, and the purchase of toys and "pretty book[s]" for the children.<sup>15</sup>

Several of Frances's wartime letters to St. George reveal the pleasure and amusement these parents received from their young children. In March 1781 she wrote: "[Fanny] is as fat as a pig and talks prodigiously, she will walk in a fortnight," adding "our Henry St. George is a sweet little fellow and begins to know me."<sup>16</sup> And in October of the same year she informed St. George: "If it was not for Fan's prattle we should be the greatest ~~mops~~ in the world. She...bids me give her love to her own Papa and tell him her name is Nancy, Sammy Ban Totti[?]<sup>17</sup>--these are her own words. She's very fat and lively."

However as the toddlers grew older, other reports suggest that the children sometimes proved difficult for their parents to manage. In 1787 Frances complained to St. George: "The children are...intolerable noisy and troublesome--it is a hard days work to attend to them and the drudgery of the house."<sup>18</sup> In another letter she revealed that this state of affairs was not uncommon for she wrote: "Our Children...go on much as usual, very Idle and Noisy."<sup>19</sup> The writings of the children themselves tend to confirm this view--in an autobiographical note written <sup>5</sup>an adult Nathaniel Beverley stated: "My earliest recollection of myself is of a sprightly idle mischievous and vain boy of four or five years old."<sup>20</sup> And as a teenager Richard told his mother that he was aware of the "many Disturbances in managing so large

a family; which employment I have often with uneasiness seen, is often very perplexing to you as well as dangerous to your health."<sup>21</sup>

One reason the Tucker parents may have had difficulty managing their children was that, like other members of the gentry, St. George and Frances considered discipline the work of servants, in particular, the work of a tutor. However, during and after the Revolution the family had difficulty finding their children a tutor. During the war Frances complained that the children "are grown quite Idle and troublesome for want of a Tuter," adding that "Mr. Tucker's absence, and my large family [make]...it impossible for me to pay necessary attention to them."<sup>22</sup> Six years later St. George wrote to his stepsons: "I must get a tutor for [the younger children]...or they will be quite spoilt."<sup>23</sup> The children themselves shared their parents' perception of a tutor's disciplinary role--young Theo wrote his stepfather, "I am such a perverse boy, that I wish I had a tutor to make me mind my book."<sup>24</sup> Eventually the Tuckers did hire an excellent young tutor, John Coalter, who educated the children and maintained discipline from 1788 to 1791. The children also received discipline from their nurse, Maria Rind, a young orphan girl who administered several of the few recorded whippings in the Tucker household.<sup>25</sup>

Although the Tuckers viewed discipline as largely the task of servants--St. George was proud that he did not use "the Rod" or "even a slight slap of [his]...hand"<sup>26</sup>--the parents attempted a variety of techniques to inspire good behavior in their child-



ren. One technique was the reading of stories and poems containing a moral or instructive message; for example, the Tucker children read the eighteenth-century book Frank Goodchild and Tom Idle.<sup>27</sup> And when young Theo seemed unable to focus on his studies, his stepfather prepared the following riddle:

Three Boys, of Hobgoblins afraid  
Together in one Bed were laid:  
They Brothers were.--Jack thus began:  
"Papa declares, he's not a man,  
That ghosts or witches fears by night,  
Or any other [fancy?] spright."

To this the second Brother said:  
"Of ghost, or witch I'm not afraid,  
Nor any thing that moves by night;  
I fear most, what I see by Light:  
There is a monster which I dread;  
Two Backs it has,--without a Head!  
Without a Finger, Arm, or Hand;  
Without a Leg, on which to stand,  
A H---? and Feet, it can command.  
Without a Tongue, a word to say,  
It seems to speak ten times a day;  
But not unless you lend your Tongue,  
To utter Sounds, of right or wrong;  
no Food what ever it receives,  
yet all its Belly's filld with Leaves:  
It makes me sick, on it to look!"  
"I vow, says Dick, you mean a Book."<sup>28</sup>

According to St. George, "the effect of this little jue d'esprit, was wonderful: Theodorick afterwards never failed to mind his Book, and to get his lessons very well."<sup>29</sup>

Another humorous composition by St. George represented an attempt to keep order after the death of his wife Frances in 1788. Entitled "The Garrison Articles," the paper contains thirteen rules "to be observed by the Officers and Privates stationed at Fort St. George in Williamsburg."<sup>30</sup> The following rules were included in "The Articles":

1. Each officer and private is to be ready for Breakfast and Dinner as soon as the same is notified by order

of the Major Commandent.

2. No officer of private shall appear at Breakfast or Dinner without their hair neatly combed, Faces and hands washed, shoes clean etc.
4. No Captain or subaltern officer, or private shall presume to dance or run about the room at Breakfast or Dinner time or any other time when the Field officers are present.\*

A second method the Tuckers used to inspire good behavior was to encourage the children to emulate specified people. While extolling the boys to follow the examples of such Revolutionary War heroes as "General Washington" and "Doctor Franklin,"<sup>31</sup> St. George also tried to provide a strong role model for them himself. He often discussed with the children events in his life that he felt would be morally instructive. For example, after experiencing bad luck on a business trip, St. George wrote the children: "When I return, I expect to be asked by one...of you how I felt, when I received the first notice of Disappointment-- I will answer you candidly, because I hope the lesson may be a good one to you." He then described how he accepted his lot with "perfect resignation and good humour."<sup>32</sup> St. George also encouraged his oldest stepson, Richard, to set a good example for his younger siblings, particularly in regard to his studies.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to the methods described above, the Tuckers' primary means of exacting obedience from their young was by making the children earn parental favor using techniques similar to the Lockean methodology involving esteem and disgrace. While there is no proof that St. George or Frances ever read John Locke's Some Thoughts on Education, members of the family did

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\*For the entire list of "Garrison Articles," see the Appendix.

read other works by Locke, and it is likely that the Tucker parents were familiar with the English educator's popular philosophy of childrearing. Children in the Tucker household earned parental esteem, which sometimes took the form of a present or special attention, by pleasing their parents. After young Fanny obediently had several teeth pulled, her father wrote that he would "perform [his] ...promise to her very punctually."<sup>35</sup> And son John was promised a watch for doing well on his school exams.<sup>36</sup> In contrast, a child who failed to please the parents lost their esteem. For example, St. George instructed his wife to warn son Tudor that "if he does not learn his [Book] I shall not permit him to sit by me at [the] Table."<sup>37</sup>

Far more than presents or special attention, the Tucker parents used their love as a reward for good behavior. "Be good and every body will love [you]," was the advice given to the children in the family.<sup>38</sup> However, Tucker children who displeased their mother or father risked the temporary loss of their parents' affections. The children responded to this treatment by writing of their fear of "disappointing" their parents and of the "tormenting state" they found themselves in when they did so.<sup>39</sup>

Employing the methods described above, the Tuckers attempted to pass on their beliefs and values to the younger generation. The two areas of greatest concern to these republican parents were their children's education and moral virtue. Thus St. George exhorted his stepsons "not to omit any

thing that can contribute to your improvement in virtue or understanding," for he believed that "without the former the latter is only a Curse: an Evil more diffusive than the pestilence, and more fatal to the possessor than Pandora's famous box."<sup>40</sup> Self-discipline and industry were frequently emphasized as tools "necessary for [both] the attainment of true knowledge" and moral virtue.<sup>41</sup>

Education was a very serious matter in the Tucker household, a fact established by St. George's repeated warnings to his children: "if you now neglect your studies you will have reason to repent all the days of your future life."<sup>42</sup> St. George first attempted to teach his young children by bringing them "enter-taining or improving Book[s]" from his travels.<sup>43</sup> He also included in the "Garrison Articles" a rule stating that: "The Duty of reading every evening is to be regularly performed by the Corps, to whom that Duty shall be by general orders assigned." However, as the children grew older, their parents sought to provide them with a more formal education, a task made difficult by the paucity of schools and tutors in the area.

To educate the older boys, St. George and Frances selected a private school run by Walker Maury in Orange County and later in Williamsburg. During their first two years at the school, Richard, Theodorick, and John all won their teachers' approval, studying in particular the classics and history. However, the boys left the school the following year because of a growing animosity between Maury and Theodorick, probably a result of both Theodorick's temper and Maury's inability to command the

respect of his students. This mutual tension reached a climax when, after playing the truant for several days, Theodorick received a beating from Maury. The young student defended himself with such vigor that according to one witness "a defeat of the Master would have ensued had he not called in his Usher as an Auxiliary."<sup>44</sup> After their departure from Maury's school the brothers enrolled in a private school in Princeton, New Jersey. Here under the tutelage of one Dr. Witherspoon, a man "more like a father...than a master," the boys all "acquitted [themselves]...with credit."<sup>45</sup>

The younger children received their education from tutor John Coalter, and, after Coalter's departure, from son Henry and from John Bracken's grammar school in Williamsburg. Like their stepbrothers, the Tucker children studied French, Greek, and Latin, geography, algebra, and natural philosophy. They also read many books of ancient and modern history, including "Rollins Ancient History" and "Voltaire's History of Louis XIV," in French. In addition, the children's social education included training in music and fencing.<sup>46</sup>

Among the moral virtues St. George and Frances hoped to instill in their children, two of the most important were patriotism and good citizenship. For the older boys the acquisition of a patriotic outlook occurred quite naturally during the excitement of the Revolution. In 1781 Frances reported to her war-weary husband: "Dick says he wou'd with pleasure limp in your stead, and Theo says he is ready to take the field whenever he is called on--he has a new Spontoon and powder Horn ready for the purpose."<sup>47</sup> A few months later eleven

year old Dick wrote of his wish that "the British may meet with destruction and their attempts be baffled in every instance, adding "I wish I was big enough to turn out if I was I would not stay at home long."<sup>48</sup> After the war the children were often reminded of their civic obligations by their patriotic father whom they affectionately called "Citizen Tucker." St. George informed the children that he desired to see them an "ornament to [their]...country" and reminded them to "discharge all the duties of a good Citizen with Chearfulness, with reputation to [themselves]...and with honor to [their]...Country."<sup>49</sup> The children's uncle Theodorick Bland frequently seconded these sentiments, writing of his wish that the children "not only do themselves honor but do Service to this Country."<sup>50</sup>

After their country, the Tucker children held their greatest obligation to their parents. Although upon reaching adulthood the children could only hope to inherit a small amount of tangible wealth--the boys were told they would receive "an Education, some books, a horse, a boy to clean him, and a small annual allowance until [they]...should be enabled to support [themselves]"<sup>51</sup>--the children were nevertheless taught that they were deeply indebted to their parents for their love and care. For example, St. George told his daughter Fanny that she could "never...repay [her mother's] kindness in this world!" adding "I trust it will be held in remembrance by you to all Eternity."<sup>52</sup> The way to begin to repay this debt was through dutiful behavior, primarily by showing respect and appreciation for their parents. This the children often did, sometimes in profuse language as in a passage Richard wrote to his mother in

1787: "My most honored most loved of Parents! Were I ever to forget for a moment your unequalled tenderness, were I to be so ungrateful as not to pay the most assiduows and constant attention to your happiness and wishes, I should not deserve the blessings I enjoy from the bountiful disposer of human happiness." The only way to repay his parents for their kindness, Richard believed, was "by walking in the ways of honor and goodness and by revering [his] ...father and mother!"<sup>53</sup>

While the Tucker children learned the correct way to regard their parents, there are no surviving letters instructing the children how to treat the family's slaves.<sup>54</sup> It is probable that, like other children in the Chesapeake, they learned to be slave owners by observing their parents. However, unlike many slave owners, the Tuckers were deeply concerned about the morality of slavery and longed to see an end to the institution, albeit slowly. In 1796 St. George published a widely read pamphlet entitled a Dissertation of Slavery: with a Proposal for its gradual Abolition in Virginia, which advocated the emancipation of all children born to slave mothers. And on their own plantations, the Tuckers desired to see their slaves well treated.<sup>55</sup> When, in 1787, a slave complained to Frances about a cruel overseer, she immediately set out to remedy the situation, telling St. George, "I can no longer leave the miserable creatures a prey to the worst part of mankind without endeavouring to mitigate as far as it is my power, the pangs of their cruel situation."<sup>56</sup> Perhaps because of their discomfort with the institution, or perhaps because of racism, the Tuckers hired a white orphan to serve as the children's nurse, instead of using a slave woman.

Although the Tuckers were not a religious family--St. George's faith was closer to deism--St. George and Frances were extremely concerned about their children's morals. *The family* seldom read the bible, <sup>but</sup> <sub>^</sub> the children were sent to church regularly and often reminded to attend to "the moral virtues," which their parents believed were "all nearly allied to each other" and which "must all be cherished, or...all be impaired."<sup>57</sup> The children were forbidden to swear,, and there was even concern about whether the boys should be allowed to act in a school play where money was to be collected.<sup>58</sup>

This parental concern for the children's morals only increased as the children grew older and became exposed to greater temptations in the world around them. In particular, St. George feared that oldest son Richard would be corrupted while he was attending school in town. "In such a place as Williamsburg, at his Age," St. George worried, "it is hard--trusting a Boy to his own head."<sup>59</sup> When problems arose involving the boys' morals, St. George often depended on Frances to use her maternal influence on the children. After discovering a deception of Richard's, St. George told Frances: "I have rebuked him,... but I wish you to write him very seriously on the subject."<sup>60</sup> Although they have not survived, Frances's lectures on moral virtue were evidently quite forceful for they always elicited a remorseful response from the boys. "Gracious God," Richard answered one such letter, "does my beloved Parent think so meanly of her Child?"<sup>61</sup> He later assured his mother of his determination to "be still more on...guard with Respect to my Morals, and take care, (to use Papa's words) that I may not be



shipwreckd on the Rocks and Quicksands which surround me."<sup>62</sup>

Like other late eighteenth-century planters, St. George greatly feared that his sons would fall into debt through extravagant living, a fear his stepsons soon justified by their bills in Williamsburg and Princeton. St. George's fear of debt stemmed in part from his conviction that extravagance posed a threat to the new nation, a belief he expressed in a poem entitled "Liberty, A Poem on the Independence of America." After attacking "Luxury" as "the deadliest foe to Liberty," he encouraged his countrymen:

...like HELVETIA'S hardy race,  
Be poverty and toil thine envied Lot,  
If LIBERTY thy board shall deign to grace,  
And smiling PEACE adorn thine humble Cot.

And to the boys he wrote, "While I am [independent],...I am much richer than thousands who are opulent."<sup>63</sup> After continuous lectures, the boys finally turned repentant and took steps to improve their financial situation.

Compared to their sons, the Tuckers experienced far less difficulty raising their daughter Fanny who proved to be submissive and tractable. It is not surprising that Fanny differed from her sometimes mischievous or troublesome brothers because her upbringing differed from theirs in several key respects. For example, while her brothers were encouraged to become brave patriots, St. George wrote that he would "not reproach [Fanny for]...a little Cowardice" because he believed "in [her]...sex it is natural--and sometimes even amiable."<sup>64</sup> Fanny's education also differed from that of her brothers; it was shorter and had a distinctly female focus. Fanny was

encouraged to learn to read so that she would be prepared when a "Billet doux should come to her from some little swain."<sup>65</sup>

Sewing also constituted a part of Fanny's education for her father expected her to learn how to make his shirts. Finally the Tucker's daughter received lessons in deportment and in music, both for singing and playing the spinnet.<sup>66</sup> In short, although the Tuckers loved their daughter as much as their sons, her upbringing differed from that of her brothers because it was designed to prepare her to be a "charming" wife and good republican mother, educated enough to properly raise future citizens.

As the Tucker children came of age, they, unlike earlier generations of sons and daughters, were considered independent adults free from parental constraints. Thus when Richard decided to marry even before reaching his "full age," St. George put aside his misgivings in the belief that he could not "presume to ...defer...an union which would have met his warmest approbation at a future day."<sup>67</sup> However St. George did discourage (but not forbid) son Beverley from marrying before he became financially independent, lest he become a burden on his brothers.<sup>68</sup> The Tuckers hoped that, in addition to being independent and free from debt, their adult children would be civic-minded and moral. In short, they hoped that each child

when he is to move on the larger theatre of the world be careful, attentive and intelligent in his Business, ...discharge all the duties of a good Citizen with Chearfulness, with reputation to himself and with honor to his Country,...live in Amity with his friends,...possess the Esteem and Confidence of his Acquaintances and Countrymen, and...possess the most inestimable of human blessings, a mind concious of its own rectitude.<sup>69</sup>

The experience of the Tucker family provides an excellent example of the new "republican" style of parenting sweeping the Chesapeake and all of the nation after the Revolution. Both St. George and Frances typified the new parent that republican citizens were encouraged to become. Less authoritarian and paternalistic than earlier fathers, St. George strove to prepare his children not to be obedient subjects of a king, but independent and intelligent citizens. Frances contributed to this work in a more equal way than earlier mothers had, particularly by teaching her sons the importance of moral virtue. Like other educated Americans throughout the country, the Tuckers followed many elements of the Lockean style of childrearing, offering parental affection as a reward for good behavior and withdrawing it for bad. And like other Americans the Tuckers stressed the importance of self-discipline and industry, encouraging the children to use these traits to advance in knowledge and virtue, all in preparation for their responsibilities as republican citizens.

Like other genteel inhabitants of the Chesapeake, the Tuckers' methods of childrearing differed significantly from those of republican parents in other areas of the new nation. For example, in contrast to many northern parents, the Tuckers did not follow Locke's instructions to break the wills of their children during early childhood, as the descriptions of the sometimes noisy and troublesome children make clear. Sharing the Chesapeake planter's fear of debt, St. George also emphasized the importance of economic independence and the dangers of

extravagance and luxury to the citizens of a republic. Although little is said about honor in the Tucker letters, it is likely that this particularly southern trait was also emphasized to the children as at least one of the sons fought in a duel as a young man.<sup>70</sup> Finally, the Tucker children's republican upbringing was marred by the presence of slavery. Although their parents were no doubt kinder to their slaves than many planters, the children nevertheless spent their childhood as members of an institutionalized class hierarchy that mocked the notion of equality and led the children to view society through different eyes than those of their northern counterparts. In conclusion, childrearing in the Tucker family clearly reflected St. George's and Frances's republican sentiments, as influenced by Chesapeake society. However, one question remains: How successful were the Tuckers in their quest to raise virtuous republican citizens?

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>Several other children born to St. George and Frances died soon after birth or in early childhood; Tudor Tucker died suddenly at age thirteen. In 1791 St. George married Lelia Carter and acquired two additional stepchildren, Polly and Charles Carter, of whom St. George was apparently very fond. To avoid confusion, St. George's wife Frances will be referred to as "Frances" and his daughter Ann Frances as "Fanny."

<sup>2</sup>St. George Tucker to Frances Tucker, September 15, 1781, Tucker-Coleman Papers, Swem Library, College of William and Mary. Hereafter cited as TCP.

<sup>3</sup>St. George Tucker to Frances Tucker, [letter written between March 18-24, 1781], TCP.

<sup>4</sup>St. George Tucker to Theodorick Randolph and John Randolph, June 12, 1787, TCP.

<sup>5</sup>St. George Tucker to Frances Tucker, [letter written between March 18-24, 1781], TCP.

<sup>6</sup>Eliza Tucker to Lelia Carter Tucker, May 14, 1795, TCP.

<sup>7</sup>Eliza Tucker to St. George Tucker, May 10, 1785, TCP; St. George Tucker to Frances Tucker, September 22, 1781, TCP.

<sup>8</sup>Theodorick Bland to Frances Tucker, January 9, 1785, TCP.

<sup>9</sup>Richard Randolph to Frances Tucker, October 4, 1786, TCP.

<sup>10</sup>Eliza Tucker to Frances Tucker, April [1786], TCP.

<sup>11</sup>Theodorick Bland to St. George Tucker, March 16, 1786, TCP; Thomas Davis to St. George Tucker, October 3, 1779, TCP.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Beverley Randolph to St. George Tucker, September 26, 1782, TCP.

<sup>14</sup>Thomas Davis to St. George Tucker, October 3, 1779, TCP; Thomas Tucker to St. George Tucker, December 23, 1784, TCP.

<sup>15</sup>Tudor Tucker to St. George Tucker, April 30, 1793, TCP; Anne Tucker to Frances Tucker, April 19 [1786], TCP; St. George Tucker to "the Boys," July 12, 1786, TCP.

<sup>16</sup>Frances Tucker to St. George Tucker, March 22, 1781, TCP.

<sup>17</sup>Frances Tucker to St. George Tucker, October 14, 1781, TCP.

<sup>18</sup>Frances Tucker to St. George Tucker, [April 1787], TCP.

<sup>19</sup>Frances Tucker to St. George Tucker, October 9, 1787, TCP.

<sup>20</sup>Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, undated Autobiographical Fragment, TCP, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup>Richard Randolph to Frances Tucker, June 25, 1787, TCP.

<sup>22</sup>Frances Tucker to Theodorick Bland, June 4, 1781, TCP.

<sup>23</sup>St. George Tucker to Theodorick Randolph and John Randolph, June 12, 1787, TCP.

<sup>24</sup>Theodorick Randolph to St. George Tucker, July 4, 1781, TCP.

<sup>25</sup>Maria Rind to St. George Tucker, undated, TCP.

<sup>26</sup>St. George Tucker to Elizabeth Tucker Coalter, August 12, 1825, TCP.

<sup>27</sup>Robert J. Brugger, Beverley Tucker: Heart over Head in the Old South (Baltimore, 1978), p. 5.

<sup>28</sup>St. George Tucker to Elizabeth Tucker Coalter, August 12, 1825, TCP.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Garrison Articles to be observed by the Officers and Privates Stationed at Fort St. George in Williamsburg. TCP.

<sup>31</sup>St. George Tucker to Theodorick Randolph and John Randolph, June 12, 1787, TCP.

<sup>32</sup>St. George Tucker to "the Boys," July 25, 1785, TCP.

<sup>33</sup>St. George Tucker to Frances Tucker, July 11, 1781, TCP.

<sup>34</sup>Henry St. George Tucker to St. George Tucker, September 7, 1796, TCP; William S. Prince, "Introduction," The Poems of St. George Tucker of Williamsburg, Virginia, 1752-1827 (New York, 1977), p. 6.

<sup>35</sup>St. George Tucker to Frances Tucker, April 7, 1787, TCP.

- <sup>36</sup> John Randolph to Frances Tucker, September 27, 1787, TCP.
- <sup>37</sup> St. George Tucker to Frances Tucker, April 7, 1787, TCP.
- <sup>38</sup> Richard Randolph to Frances Tucker, June 25, 1787, TCP.
- <sup>39</sup> Richard Randolph to Frances Tucker, August 18, 1786, TCP; Tudor Tucker to St. George Tucker, May 5, 1794, TCP; Richard Randolph to Frances Tucker, October 28, 1787, TCP.
- <sup>40</sup> St. George Tucker to Theodorick Randolph and John Randolph, June 12, 1787, TCP.
- <sup>41</sup> Henry St. George Tucker to St. George Tucker, September 7, 1796, TCP.
- <sup>42</sup> St. George Tucker to Frances Tucker, September 27, 1781, TCP.
- <sup>43</sup> St. George Tucker to Frances Tucker, September 21, 1780, TCP.
- <sup>44</sup> Walker Maury to Theodorick Bland, August 24, 1786, TCP; John Bannister to St. George Tucker, September 13, 1786, TCP; Mary Haldane Coleman, St. George Tucker: Citizen of No Mean City (Richmond, Va., 1938), p. 79.
- <sup>45</sup> John Randolph to St. George Tucker, April 22, 1786; Theodorick Randolph to Frances Tucker, April 22, 1786, TCP.
- <sup>46</sup> John Randolph to Frances Tucker, June 20, 1786, TCP; Richard Randolph to Frances Tucker, August 18, 1786; Henry St. George Tucker to St. George Tucker, August 18, 1798, TCP; Richard Randolph to Frances Tucker, [April 1786], TCP; Brugger, Beverley Tucker, p. 11.
- <sup>47</sup> Frances Tucker to St. George Tucker, March 24, 1781, TCP
- <sup>48</sup> Richard Randolph to St. George Tucker, July 9, 1781, TCP.
- <sup>49</sup> St. George Tucker to Theodorick Randolph and John Randolph, June 12, 1787; St. George Tucker to Theodorick Randolph and John Randolph, April 22, 1787, TCP.
- <sup>50</sup> Theodorick Bland to the "Boys," January 26, 1781, TCP.
- <sup>51</sup> St. George Tucker to Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, July 28, 1807, TCP.
- <sup>52</sup> St. George Tucker to Fanny Tucker, March 10, 1810, TCP.
- <sup>53</sup> Richard Randolph to St. George Tucker and Frances Tucker, July 15, 1787, TCP.

<sup>54</sup>There are also no surviving letters mentioning the presence of slave nurses or black playmates, although it is likely that the Tucker children played with slave children while the family lived at Matoax, a large family plantation.

<sup>55</sup>St. George Tucker to Maria Rind, May 24, 1791, TCP.

<sup>56</sup>Frances Tucker to St. George Tucker, [November 1787?], TCP.

<sup>57</sup>Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, undated Autobiographical Fragment, TCP, p. 5; St. George Tucker to Theodorick Randolph and John Randolph, June 12, 1787, TCP. The church was most likely Bruton Parish Church, an Anglican church, <sup>that</sup> Frances and St. George attended occasionally and where they allegedly met.

<sup>58</sup>Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, undated Autobiographical Fragment, p. 5; Walker Maury to St. George Tucker, August 2, 1785, TCP.

<sup>59</sup>St. George Tucker to Frances Tucker, April 23, 1786, TCP.

<sup>60</sup>St. George Tucker to Frances Tucker, June 29, 1786, TCP.

<sup>61</sup>Richard Randolph to Frances Tucker, October 28, 1787, TCP.

<sup>62</sup>Richard Randolph to Frances Tucker, May 19, 1786, TCP.

<sup>63</sup>St. George Tucker to the "Boys," July 25, 1786, TCP.

<sup>64</sup>St. George Tucker to Frances Tucker, April 7, 1787, TCP.

<sup>65</sup>Theodorick Bland to St. George Tucker, August 14, 1786, TCP.

<sup>66</sup>St. George Tucker to Frances Tucker, October 29, 1787, TCP; Coleman, St. George Tucker, p. 100; Anne Tucker to Frances Tucker, October 28, 1787, TCP.

<sup>67</sup>St. George Tucker to Ann Randolph, TCP.

<sup>68</sup>St. George Tucker to Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, July 28, 1807, TCP.

<sup>69</sup>St. George Tucker to Theodorick Randolph and John Randolph, April 22, 1787, TCP.

<sup>70</sup>John Randolph fought in a duel at the College of William and Mary in 1793 (Anne Banister to St. George Tucker, undated letter, TCP; Dumas Malone, ed., Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1935), XV, s.v. "John Randolph," p. 364).



## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

Is there a Name my dear St. George in this Western Hemisphere that would take the Lead of ours?

Henry Tucker

Great changes came to the Tucker household late in the 1780s. On January 18, 1788, after suffering for years from poor health, Frances Tucker died, and St. George moved his grief-stricken family from their isolated plantation to a house on Market Green in Williamsburg. Here several years later he wed another widow, Lelia Skipwith Carter, daughter of Sir Peyton Skipwith. Although St. George behaved less romantically toward his second wife--for example, he never wrote her the poetry he often composed for Frances--the marriage was nevertheless a happy one.<sup>1</sup> St. George was particularly pleased that his "dear Children participate in their father's felicity."<sup>2</sup> While receiving the children's affections, Lelia also retained Frances's important position in the family, holding authority over her stepsons as well as her stepdaughters. She issued so many instructions that, while "endeavoring to comply with all her commands," son Henry reported that he "should not be surprised if [he]...were to forget some of them."<sup>3</sup> Lelia also brought two children of her own to the family: Charles and Polly Carter, who, like the Tucker children, were considered very noisy and were very much loved.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time that these two children were coming into

the Tucker household, the three Randolph brothers were growing up and leaving home. As boys, Richard, Theodorick, and John had all shown great promise; during their final years of schooling friends commented on their "good sense, good breeding, and Manner of thinking beyond their years."<sup>5</sup> A friend from Princeton reported: "Your Boys are very justly much admired here. Jack is highly so."<sup>6</sup> The first to leave home was the oldest brother, Richard, who married his cousin Judith Randolph in 1789 and settled at Bizarre, a plantation he inherited from his father, John Randolph. Soon two sons, St. George and Tudor, were born to the young couple. Then in 1793 Richard Randolph was arrested for infanticide in a case involving his wife's sister, with himself as the alleged father of the baby. Although acquitted, his name was never cleared in the public mind, and he died in disgrace in 1796. His brother Theodorick also died tragically young after a year's illness at age twenty-two.<sup>7</sup>

The youngest and longest-lived Randolph brother was also the most complex. Elected to Congress in 1799, John Randolph served intermittently until 1829, earning a reputation as a brilliant orator. His political philosophy included a belief in strict construction of the Constitution and in states' rights; he described himself as both a lover of liberty and an aristocrat. However, he suffered very poor health his entire life, and during his political career he showed increasing signs of instability and insanity. At home he was cruel to his slaves (whom he later freed in his will) and broke all ties with his stepfather. Of this St. George wrote in 1816: "I have felt the

bitterness of that by which the affections of one whom I had educated, and regarded from childhood in the same light as if he had been my own son have been alienated from me." With one exception, St. George described this misfortune as "the greatest and most afflicting" of his life.<sup>8</sup> John Randolph died in 1833 at age sixty-one, the great promise displayed in his youth overshadowed by his unstable temperament.<sup>9</sup>

Death also took several of the Tucker children at an early age. During the 1790s Tudor died at age thirteen, a young daughter Betsy at age eight, and a young son "Tutee" at age three. After surviving a sickly childhood, Fanny lived only to her midthirties. In 1801 she married the family's old tutor, John Coalter, and moved to Augusta county. Concerned for her health in that less-settled region, St. George gave several slaves to the new household; however, the gentle and submissive Fanny proved a failure as a slave mistress, for, as John Coalter reported, his "poor wife [was] a perpetual slave of [her] slaves."<sup>10</sup> Fanny and her husband had three children, Elizabeth, Frances Lelia, and St. George, all named for members of the Tucker family. Fanny died in 1813.

The final two Tucker children, Henry St. George and Nathaniel Beverley, both studied law at the College of William and Mary. There Henry delivered a baccalaureate address entitled "On the Nature of Civil Liberty and the Form of Government Best Adopted to Its Preservation," in which he concluded that a republic was the best type of government for the preservation of liberty. After graduating, Henry began a career that was to

parallel his father's to a remarkable degree, becoming a lawyer, legislator, judge, law professor, and judicial writer. As a legislator, Henry introduced a bill to the Virginia Senate which allowed for the gradual emancipation of slaves; it was defeated by one vote. And like his father, Henry volunteered to fight for his country (in the War of 1812) and wrote light poetry.<sup>11</sup> As a young man Henry wrote to his father, "I shall always glory in thinking that I am your dutiful son,"<sup>12</sup> and the two men remained on very close terms throughout their lives. Nathaniel Beverly's career also mirrored his father's in many ways, for he became a judge, a law professor at the College of William and Mary, a legislator, a volunteer soldier during the War of 1812, and a writer of law books, poetry, and novels. A strong advocate for states' rights, Nathaniel Beverley also presented slavery very positively in his works of romantic fiction. He died at age sixty-seven, the father of six children.<sup>13</sup>

St. George himself lived out his life in the white frame house in Williamsburg, ensconced in his comfortable panelled study, surrounded by his books, looking out on the activities on Market Square. During these years other parents often sought his advice; for example, in 1795 his new father-in-law, Peyton Skipwith, requested St. George to select a school for his son and <sup>to</sup> give him enough advice to "bring about a reformation in him." Skipwith later asked that, in the event of his death, St. George "undertake the guardianship and education" of his son whom he feared would require "the strong controlling arm not only of principle but of example."<sup>14</sup> And during his last years St. George delighted in visiting and corresponding with his

grandchildren. He was particularly fond of Fanny's young brood, whom he addressed as "little monkeys," "dear Toads," and "beloved brats," even sending Fanny the description of a style of dress he thought might suit his granddaughters.<sup>15</sup> St. George Tucker died on November 10, 1827. A friend's parting letter to him concluded: "Above all you have the proud privilege of knowing that you will leave behind eminent children who would render your name lasting, if you had not erected for yourself a monument which must endure as long as the Laws and Constutition of our Country."<sup>16</sup>

It is difficult to judge the success of the Tuckers' child-rearing methods because, like all sons and daughters, the children in the Tucker household brought both joy and pain to their parents. John Randolph, in particular, caused St. George much anxiety as this stepson became more and more distant and unstable. However, the other children all eventually recreated their parents' affectionate household in new families of their own and worked industriously in careers as lawyers and as a planter's wife. Most important, as the product of their parents' efforts to raise republican citizens, the adult children all displayed remarkable patriotism and civic-mindedness--although their specific responses to political issues differed, as did their attitudes toward slavery.

Perhaps one of the most interesting facts about childrearing in the Tucker family is how much more closely it resembles child-rearing in America today. In part because of their desire to raise republican citizens and in part because of their changing assumptions about society and the family, late eighteenth-century

parents like the Tuckers moved from an older, authoritarian method of childrearing to a style much closer to the more affectionate and permissive style practiced today. And while their new style of childrearing reflected the movement toward equality in society, the government, and the family, it also reinforced this change, ensuring that the new generation would grow up familiar with America's new beliefs and values.

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup>William S. Prince, "Introduction," The Poems of St. George Tucker of Williamsburg, Virginia, 1752-1827 (New York, 1977), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>St. George Tucker to John Page, January 15, 1792, TCP.

<sup>3</sup>Henry St. George Tucker to St. George Tucker, July 21, 1799, TCP.

<sup>4</sup>Fanny Tucker to St. George Tucker, June 23, 1794, TCP.

<sup>5</sup>Henrietta Maria Colden to Frances Tucker, December 28, 1787, TCP.

<sup>6</sup>John Page to St. George Tucker, May 3, 1789, TCP.

<sup>7</sup>Mary Haldane Coleman, St. George Tucker: Citizen of No Mean City (Richmond, Va., 1938), 109-112.

<sup>8</sup>St. George Tucker to Henry St. George Tucker, March 10, 1816, TCP.

<sup>9</sup>Dumas Malone, ed., Dictionary of American Biography (New York, 1935), XV, s.v. "John Randolph."

<sup>10</sup>John Coalter to St. George Tucker, quoted in Coleman, St. George Tucker, p. 159.

<sup>11</sup>Henry Tucker to St. George Tucker, June 16, 1799, TCP; Malone, ed., Dictionary (Richmond, Va., 1936), IX, s.v. "Henry St. George Tucker."

<sup>12</sup>Henry St. George Tucker to St. George Tucker, May 19, 1798, TCP.

<sup>13</sup>Malone, ed., Dictionary, IX, s.v. "Nathaniel Beverley Tucker;" Robert J. Brugger, Beverley Tucker: Heart over Head in the Old South (Baltimore, 1978), pp. xiii-xiv.

<sup>14</sup>Peyton Skipwith to St. George Tucker, February 20, 1795, TCP; Peyton Skipwith to St. George Tucker, December 28, 1803, TCP.

<sup>15</sup>St. George Tucker to Frances Tucker Coalter, quoted in Coleman, St. George Tucker, p. 143.

<sup>16</sup>John Page to St. George Tucker, quoted in Coleman, St. George Tucker, p. 184.



## Appendix

### Garrison Articles

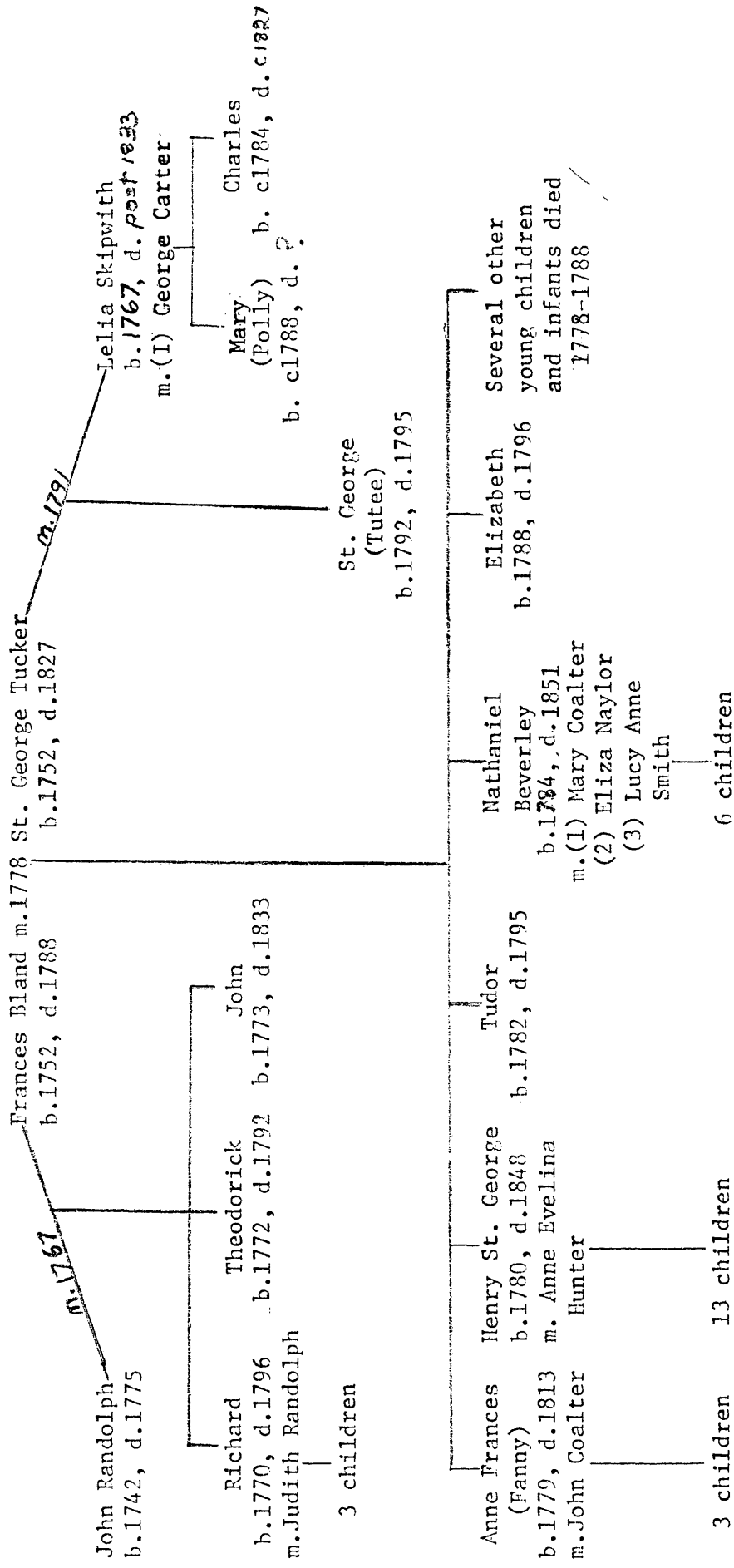
to be observed by the Officers and Privates stationed at Fort St. George in Williamsburg

1. Each officer and private is to be ready for Breakfast and Dinner as soon the same is notified by order of the Major Commandant.
2. No officer or private shall appear at Breakfast or Dinner without their hair neatly combed, Faces and hands washed, shoes clean etc.
3. No officer under the rank of a Major shall presume to stand round the fire in the dining room if any superior officer be present--nor any private if any officer be present.
4. No Captain or subaltern officer, or private shall presume to dance or run about the room at Breakfast or Dinnertime or any other time when the Field officers are present.
5. No officer under the rank of a Major, or private shall run about in the parlour.
6. The officers and privates of the second Company, are always to be drawn up in proper order when in the parlour, and stationed on the settee, or elsewhere in the rear of the first Company.
7. The Duty of reading every evening is to be regularly performed by the Corps, to whom that Duty shall be by general orders assigned.
8. In Case of misbehavior by any private in the Regiment, information thereof is to be immediately given to the Major, or Commander in chief. This rule extends to the Officers of the Second Company as well as privates.
9. Any officer convicted of misbehavior or neglect of Duty shall be instantly degraded to the rank of private.
10. No officer or private is to presume to lay hands or Feet on the Furniture in the parlour.

11. Good order and Decorum, peace, and a good understanding and agreement being the principal object of the Garrison [house?], every thing contrary thereto will be strongly [-----] upon.
12. Cleanliness being also a great Desideratum, every thing which tends to the opposite vice will be considered as highly reprehensible, and treated as such.
13. Health and whole bones, being also Objects of the Governments particular attention, whoever does any thing to endanger either, will be considered as guilty of a high misdemeanour.

# THE FAMILY

## OF ST. GEORGE AND FRANCES TUCKER



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